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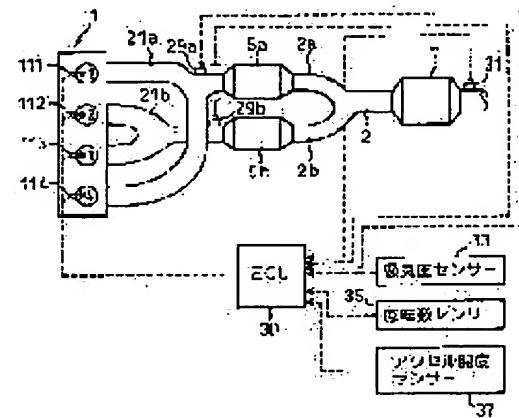
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## (54) EXHAUST EMISSION CONTROL DEVICE FOR LEAN BURN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE

### (57)Abstract:

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To prevent variation in air-fuel ratio from delaying due to an O<sub>2</sub> storage function of catalyst.  
**SOLUTION:** Start catalysts(SC) 5a, 5b each having an O<sub>2</sub> storage function are located in exhaust passages 2a, 2b of an engine 1, and an NO<sub>x</sub> occlusion and reduction catalyst 7 is located on a downstream side merging exhaust passage 2. During lean mixture operation of an engine, the catalyst 7 is allowed to absorb NO<sub>x</sub> from exhaust gas, and the engine is operated with a rich mixture when the NO<sub>x</sub> is emitted so as to increase the air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas flowing into the start catalysts 5a, 5b and the catalyst 7. An ECU 30 carries out secondary fuel injection which does not contribute combustion, by means of cylinder fuel injection values 111 to 114 during expansion or exhaust stroke of each engine cylinder so as to increase the air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas flowing into the start catalysts 5a, 5b in order to emit oxygen occluded in the start catalysts 5a, 5b when the ECU 30 changes over the operation from the rich mixture operation into the lean mixture operation. Thereby, it is possible to prevent variation in air-fuel ratio from a lean mixture into a rich mixture from delaying upon change-over of air-fuel ratio.



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**CLAIMS****[Claim(s)]**

[Claim 1] O<sub>2</sub> which is the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine which switches an operation air-fuel ratio to operation of operation and theoretical air fuel ratio of the Lean air-fuel ratio, or a rich air-fuel ratio if needed, and has been arranged in the engine flueway. The exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function, In case said engine is switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or rich air-fuel ratio operation from the Lean air-fuel ratio operation. The exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine having a storage reduction means to reduce the amount of oxygen stored in said exhaust air clarification catalyst by making more rich than an engine operation air-fuel ratio the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which supplies the fuel which is not contributed to combustion to an engine, and flows into said exhaust air clarification catalyst.

[Claim 2] Furthermore, NOX under exhaust air when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into the flueway of said exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream is the Lean air-fuel ratio NOX absorbed when it absorbed and the oxygen density under flowing exhaust air fell NOX to emit It has an occlusion reduction catalyst. Said storage reduction means is NOX further. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst Exhaust emission control device according to claim 1 which reduces the amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst when it should have been made to emit.

[Claim 3] It is said NOX during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of said engine. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst Exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine according to claim 2 which reduces the amount of oxygen which was equipped with a means to perform rich spike actuation which switches a short-time engine's operation air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio when it should have been made to emit, and was stored in said exhaust air clarification catalyst by said storage reduction means at the time of rich spike actuation.

[Claim 4] O<sub>2</sub> which is the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine which performs the Lean air-fuel ratio operation if needed, and has been arranged in the engine flueway. The exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function, NOX under exhaust air when the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air arranged in the flueway of said exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream is the Lean air-fuel ratio NOX absorbed when it absorbed and the oxygen density under flowing exhaust air fell NOX to emit Occlusion reduction catalyst, It is said NOX during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of an engine. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst A means to perform rich spike actuation which switches a short-time engine's operation air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio when it should be made to emit, The exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine having a storage reduction means to reduce the amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst by making still more rich than the air-fuel ratio under rich spike actuation the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into the predetermined period aforementioned exhaust air clarification catalyst immediately after said rich spike actuation initiation.

[Claim 5] Said storage reduction means is the exhaust emission control device of an internal combustion engine given in any 1 term of claims 1-4 which are equipped with a storage presumption means to presume the amount of oxygen stored in said exhaust air clarification catalyst based on said engine's operational status, and perform said amount reduction actuation of oxygen according to the presumed amount of storage oxygen.

[Claim 6] Said storage presumption means is the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine according to claim 5 which presumes the amount of oxygen which was stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst based on the degradation condition of said exhaust air clarification catalyst in addition to said engine's operational status.

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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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### [Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to an internal combustion engine's exhaust emission control device, and is O<sub>2</sub> in a detail. It is related with the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine having the exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] It is O<sub>2</sub> to the flueway of the engine operated near theoretical air fuel ratio. Exhaust air clarification three way component catalysts, such as a three way component catalyst which has a storage function, are arranged, and it is HC, CO, and NOX under exhaust air. The technique which purifies three components is known. O<sub>2</sub> of a three way component catalyst The function which emits the oxygen absorbed when a storage function had the rich air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which absorbs the oxygen component under exhaust air when the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air is Lean in a catalyst, holds, and flows is said. As everyone knows, a three way component catalyst is HC, CO, and NOX under exhaust air when the flowing exhaust air air-fuel ratio is in the narrow range near theoretical air fuel ratio. Although three components can be purified simultaneously, when an exhaust air air-fuel ratio shifts from theoretical air fuel ratio, it has the property it becomes impossible to purify the three above-mentioned component simultaneously. On the other hand, it is O<sub>2</sub> to a three way component catalyst. When the storage function was added and the exhaust air which flows into a three way component catalyst becomes Lean from theoretical air fuel ratio, the surplus oxygen under exhaust air for a catalyst is absorbed, when it becomes rich, oxygen comes to be emitted from a catalyst, and even when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into a catalyst separates from theoretical air fuel ratio, it becomes possible to maintain the ambient atmosphere of a three way component catalyst near the theoretical air fuel ratio. For this reason, it is exhaust air of the engine operated with the air-fuel ratio near theoretical air fuel ratio O<sub>2</sub> By purifying using the three way component catalyst which has a storage function, they are HC, CO, and NOX. It becomes possible to purify three components good.

[0003] NOX absorbed when NOX under exhaust air on the other hand when the flowing exhaust air air-fuel ratio is Lean (nitrogen oxides) was absorbed and the oxygen density under flowing exhaust air fell NOX to emit The occlusion reduction catalyst is known. NOX As an example of the exhaust emission control device which used the occlusion reduction catalyst, there are some which were indicated by the patent registration No. 2600492, for example. The exhaust emission control device of the above-mentioned patent is NOX to the flueway of the engine which performs the Lean air-fuel ratio operation. An occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged. It is NOX during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of an engine. NOX under exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst It is made to absorb and is NOX. NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst When an absorbed amount increases By performing rich spike actuation of operating an engine with short-time theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio, it is NOX. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst NOX emitted while making it emit Reduction clarification is carried out. That is, if the air-fuel ratio of exhaust air turns into theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio, while the oxygen density under exhaust air will fall rapidly compared with exhaust air of the Lean air-fuel ratio, unburnt [ under exhaust air / HC ] and the amount of CO component increase rapidly. For this reason, it is NOX if an engine operation air-fuel ratio is switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio by rich spike actuation. The air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst changes from the Lean air-fuel ratio to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio, and is NOX by lowering of the oxygen density under exhaust air. An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is emitted. Moreover, since comparatively a lot of unburnt [ HC ] and CO components are contained as mentioned above during exhaust

air of theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio, it is NOX. NOX emitted from the occlusion reduction catalyst It reacts with unburnt [ under exhaust air / HC ], and CO component, and is returned.

[0004]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] NOX which is generated during engine Lean air-fuel ratio operation according to the exhaust emission control device of an above-mentioned patent registration [ No. 2600492 ] publication It becomes possible to purify efficiently. However, it is O2 as a start catalyst to the equipment of the above-mentioned patent registration No. 2600492. When adding the three way component catalyst which has a storage function, a problem may arise.

[0005] The start catalyst sets it as the main objects from the engine to remove HC emitted so much and CO component at the time of engine start up, and it needs to arrange it in the location near an engine as much as possible of a flueway so that temperature up may be carried out in a short time after engine start up and catalytic activity-sized temperature may be reached. For this reason, a start catalyst is NOX when adding to the exhaust emission control device of the above-mentioned patent registration No. 2600492. It is arranged in the flueway of the upstream of an occlusion reduction catalyst.

[0006] However, O2 It is NOX, using as a start catalyst the catalyst which has a storage function. When it has arranged to the upstream flueway of an occlusion reduction catalyst, it is NOX during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation. NOX from an occlusion reduction catalyst If rich spike actuation for bleedoff and reduction clarification is performed, it is NOX in early stages of rich spike actuation. NOX It has become clear that the problem emitted while not having been purified from an occlusion reduction catalyst arises.

[0007] This problem is NOX at the time of rich spike actuation. The change to Rich from Lean of the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst is O2 of a start catalyst. It thinks for producing delay for a storage operation. That is, a start catalyst is O2, although the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air from an engine will change from Lean rapidly richly if rich spike actuation is performed. Since it has a storage function, if exhaust air of this rich air-fuel ratio flows into a start catalyst, the absorbed oxygen will be emitted from a start catalyst, and the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows out of a start catalyst is maintained near the theoretical air fuel ratio. For this reason, it is NOX even if it starts rich spike actuation. The air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst does not turn into sufficient rich air-fuel ratio until it finishes emitting the whole quantity of the oxygen which the start catalyst absorbed, but the case where it is maintained by the Lean air-fuel ratio near theoretical air fuel ratio produces it.

[0008] NOX It is NOX if the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst changes from the Lean air-fuel ratio to the Lean air-fuel ratio near theoretical air fuel ratio. The oxygen density near the front face of an occlusion reduction catalyst falls rapidly. It is NOX so that it may mention later. An occlusion reduction catalyst is NOX in the form of the nitrate ion combined with the alkaline earth (for example, Ba) etc. It is NOX if the oxygen density near a catalyst front face falls, although held inside a catalyst. NOX held near the front face of an occlusion reduction catalyst It comes to be emitted from a catalyst front face all at once. In this case, NOX NOX emitted during exhaust air when the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst was maintained by the Lean air-fuel ratio near theoretical air fuel ratio NOX emitted since HC of sufficient amount to return the whole quantity and CO were not contained A part is NOX as it is, without being returned. It will come to flow into the occlusion reduction catalyst downstream. For this reason, it is NOX by O2 storage function of a start catalyst at the time of rich spike actuation. It is NOX if it is overdue that the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst reaches an air-fuel ratio rich enough. NOX which is not purified from an occlusion reduction catalyst It is thought that it comes to flow out.

[0009] Since the air-fuel ratio of exhaust air of the start catalyst downstream will also turn into the same rich air-fuel ratio as the start catalyst upstream if the whole quantity of the oxygen absorbed by the start catalyst is emitted as mentioned above, it is NOX. Exhaust air of an air-fuel ratio rich enough comes to be supplied to an occlusion reduction catalyst. Therefore, it is NOX, if a certain amount of time amount passes after starting rich spike actuation. NOX emitted from the occlusion reduction catalyst NOX The whole quantity comes to be purified on an occlusion reduction catalyst, and it is NOX. NOX which is not purified from an occlusion reduction catalyst Runoff stops. However, it is NOX for every rich spike actuation as mentioned above. NOX which is not purified from an occlusion reduction catalyst By having flowed out, it is NOX as the whole. The problem to which the rate of clarification falls arises.

[0010] moreover, in an engine which switches an engine's operation air-fuel ratio to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio according to an engine's operational status Although the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air from an engine may be switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel

ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio even if it does not perform rich spike actuation. Also in this case, it is O<sub>2</sub> of an exhaust air clarification catalyst. Because of a storage function, it is NOX in the case of an operation air-fuel ratio switch. If the period when the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst is temporarily maintained by the Lean air-fuel ratio near the theoretical air fuel ratio arises the above -- the same -- non-purified NOX it emits -- having -- exhaust air -- the problem on which description gets worse arises.

[0011] This invention takes an example by the above-mentioned problem, and is O<sub>2</sub>. It aims at preventing the delay of change to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream in the case of having arranged to the flueway the exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function.

[0012]

[Means for Solving the Problem] According to invention according to claim 1, it is the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine which switches an operation air-fuel ratio to operation of operation and theoretical air fuel ratio of the Lean air-fuel ratio, or a rich air-fuel ratio if needed. O<sub>2</sub> arranged in the engine flueway The exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function, In case said engine is switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or rich air-fuel ratio operation from the Lean air-fuel ratio operation The exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine having a storage reduction means to reduce the amount of oxygen stored in said exhaust air clarification catalyst is offered by making more rich than an engine operation air-fuel ratio the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which supplies the fuel which is not contributed to combustion to an engine, and flows into said exhaust air clarification catalyst.

[0013] That is, in invention of claim 1, in case an engine's operation air-fuel ratio is switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio, the fuel which is not contributed to combustion is supplied to an engine. This fuel serves as an unburnt HC component, not burned, and is discharged by the engine with exhaust air. For this reason, the exhaust air which is an air-fuel ratio more rich than an engine operation air-fuel ratio for an exhaust air clarification catalyst, and contains unburnt [ HC ] so much flows. In this case, O<sub>2</sub> of an exhaust air clarification catalyst Oxygen is emitted from an exhaust air clarification catalyst by the storage function. However, O<sub>2</sub> Since there is a limitation in the bleedoff rate of the oxygen by storage, with the oxygen emitted when a lot of unburnt HC components were contained during the flowing exhaust air, it becomes impossible to oxidize the whole quantity of the unburnt HC component under exhaust air, and the air-fuel ratio of exhaust air of the exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream turns into an air-fuel ratio by the side of rich from theoretical air fuel ratio. That is, since the oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst is emitted and it is consumed promptly, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream also comes to change to a rich air-fuel ratio promptly. For this reason, O<sub>2</sub> of an exhaust air clarification catalyst The delay of the air-fuel ratio change by the storage function is prevented. in addition, supply of the fuel which is not contributed to combustion will stop, if the amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst is fully reduced, and it falls to extent from which bleedoff of the oxygen from an exhaust air clarification catalyst does not become a problem practically namely,. Moreover, if the engine which has the charge injection valve of cylinder internal combustion which injects a direct fuel in a cylinder as a storage reduction means has, in the expansion stroke or exhaust stroke of each cylinder, a fuel may be injected in a cylinder, and if the engine which has the exhaust port fuel injection valve which performs fuel injection to each cylinder exhaust port has, a fuel may be injected to an exhaust port. Moreover, O<sub>2</sub> Supply of the fuel which is not contributed to combustion by the storage reduction means may be performed during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation in front of a switch of an engine operation air-fuel ratio, and you may carry out during operation of the theoretical air fuel ratio immediately after a switch, or a rich air-fuel ratio.

[0014] According to invention according to claim 2, further to the flueway of said exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream NOX under exhaust air when the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air is the Lean air-fuel ratio NOX absorbed when it absorbed and the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air turned into a rich air-fuel ratio It has the NOX occlusion reduction catalyst to emit. Said storage reduction means is NOX further. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst When it should be made to emit, the exhaust emission control device according to claim 1 which reduces the amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst is offered.

[0015] NOX which absorbed from said NOX occlusion reduction catalyst during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of said engine according to invention according to claim 3 When it should be made to emit, it has a means perform rich spike actuation which switches a short-time engine's operation air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio, and the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine according to claim

2 which reduces the amount of oxygen stored in said exhaust-air clarification catalyst by said storage reduction means at the time of rich spike actuation is offered.

[0016] That is, by invention with claim 2 and claim 3, it is O<sub>2</sub>. It is NOX to the downstream of an exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function. The occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged and it is NOX. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst O<sub>2</sub> of the exhaust air clarification by the storage reduction means when it should be made to emit Reduction of a storage function is performed. for this reason, only not only in when an engine operation air-fuel ratio is switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio by change of operational status from the Lean air-fuel ratio NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX in case it is made to emit. The air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst It is NOX also when making it change from the Lean air-fuel ratio to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio. The air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst comes to change from the Lean air-fuel ratio to sufficient rich air-fuel ratio promptly, and is NOX. NOX which is not purified from an occlusion reduction catalyst Flowing out is prevented.

[0017] O<sub>2</sub> which according to invention according to claim 4 is the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine which performs the Lean air-fuel ratio operation if needed, and has been arranged in the engine flueway The exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function, NOX under exhaust air when the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air arranged in the flueway of said exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream is the Lean air-fuel ratio NOX absorbed when it absorbed and the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air turned into a rich air-fuel ratio NOX to emit Occlusion reduction catalyst, It is said NOX during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of an engine. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst A means to perform rich spike actuation which switches a short-time engine's operation air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio when it should be made to emit, By making still more rich than the air-fuel ratio under rich spike actuation the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into the predetermined period aforementioned exhaust air clarification catalyst immediately after said rich spike actuation initiation The exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine having a storage reduction means to reduce the amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst is offered.

[0018] That is, by invention of claim 4, it is NOX. NOX from an occlusion reduction catalyst When performing rich spike actuation for bleedoff and reduction clarification, the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into the predetermined period exhaust air clarification catalyst immediately after rich spike initiation is held still more richly than the exhaust air air-fuel ratio under subsequent rich spike actuation. Thereby, also while oxygen is emitted by O<sub>2</sub> storage function from the exhaust air clarification catalyst, also while unburnt [ of sufficient amount to consume the whole quantity of the emitted oxygen / HC ] and CO component come to be contained during exhaust air and oxygen is emitted from the exhaust air clarification catalyst, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream turns into sufficient rich air-fuel ratio. Therefore, NOX of the exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream Exhaust air of an air-fuel ratio rich enough comes to be supplied to an occlusion reduction catalyst from the time of rich spike actuation initiation, and it is NOX. NOX which is not purified from an occlusion reduction catalyst Runoff is prevented. In addition, the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into an exhaust air clarification catalyst immediately after rich spike initiation is NOX of sufficient amount to consume the whole quantity of the oxygen emitted from the exhaust air clarification catalyst, and the downstream. NOX emitted from an occlusion reduction catalyst It is set up so that unburnt [ of the amount which totaled sufficient amount to purify the whole quantity / HC ], and CO component may be included. Moreover, as a storage reduction means, like claims 1-3, although the fuel which is not contributed to an engine like at combustion although fuel injection is performed to the thing and exhaust port which perform fuel injection in a cylinder into expansion or the exhaust stroke of a cylinder is supplied, an engine's operation air-fuel ratio may be made still more rich than under a period predetermined [ after others and rich spike initiation ], and subsequent rich spike actuation. Moreover, the above-mentioned predetermined period is set as sufficient time amount to emit the whole quantity of the oxygen absorbed from the exhaust air clarification catalyst.

[0019] According to invention according to claim 5, said storage reduction means is equipped with a storage presumption means to presume the amount of oxygen stored in said exhaust air clarification catalyst based on said engine's operational status, and any 1 term of claims 1-4 which perform said amount reduction actuation of oxygen according to the presumed amount of storage oxygen is provided with the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine of a publication. That is, in invention of claim 5, a storage reduction means performs the amount reduction actuation of oxygen according to the presumed amount of oxygen while presuming the amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst. For example, a storage reduction means lengthens time amount which the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which

flows into an exhaust air clarification catalyst is reduced, so that there are many amounts of storage oxygen (that is, it is deep in a rich degree), or continues the amount reduction actuation of oxygen. Thereby, the amount reduction actuation of oxygen comes to be performed to accuracy, and the delay of change of the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air clarification catalyst downstream comes to be prevented certainly. In addition, the amount presumption of storage oxygen of the exhaust air clarification catalyst by the storage reduction means is performed for example, whenever [ catalyst temperature ] based on engine operational status, such as hysteresis (duration time of the Lean air-fuel ratio operation and rich air-fuel ratio operation) of air-fuel ratio change of an exhaust air flow rate and an engine.

[0020] According to invention according to claim 6, the exhaust emission control device of the internal combustion engine according to claim 5 which presumes the amount of oxygen in which said storage presumption means was stored in the exhaust air clarification catalyst based on the degradation condition of said exhaust air clarification catalyst in addition to said engine's operational status is offered. In addition to engine operational status, in invention of claim 6, a storage reduction means presumes the amount of storage oxygen based on the degradation condition of an exhaust air clarification catalyst. O2 A storage function falls with degradation of an exhaust air clarification catalyst, and the amount of oxygen (the amount of saturation oxygen) which can store an exhaust air clarification catalyst decreases with degradation of an exhaust air clarification catalyst. That is, the oxygen of the amount more than the amount of saturation oxygen is not stored in an exhaust air clarification catalyst. Therefore, by taking into consideration the degradation condition of an exhaust air clarification catalyst, it becomes possible to presume more the amount of storage oxygen of an exhaust air clarification catalyst to accuracy, and it becomes possible to perform the amount reduction actuation of oxygen to accuracy further.

[0021]

[Embodiment of the Invention] Hereafter, the operation gestalt of this invention is explained with reference to an accompanying drawing. Drawing 1 is drawing showing the outline configuration of the operation gestalt at the time of applying this invention to an automobile engine. In drawing 1, 1 shows an automobile engine. With this operation gestalt, one is used as the 4-cylinder gasoline engine which had four cylinders of #4 from the engine#1, and the fuel injection valves 111-114 which inject a fuel in a direct cylinder are formed in # 4-cylinder from #1. Let the internal combustion engine 1 of this operation gestalt be the lean burn engine which can be operated with an air-fuel ratio higher (Lean) than theoretical air fuel ratio so that you may mention later.

[0022] Moreover, with this operation gestalt, the group division of the cylinder of #1 to #4 is carried out at two cylinder groups which consist of two cylinders which ignition timing does not follow mutually. (For example, cylinder firing order is 1-3-4-2, and the cylinder of #1 and #4 and the cylinder of #2 and #3 constitute the cylinder group from an operation gestalt of drawing 1, respectively.) It connects with an exhaust manifold for every cylinder group, and the exhaust port of each cylinder is connected to the flueway for every cylinder group again. In drawing 1, the exhaust manifold which connects to individual flueway 2a the exhaust port of a cylinder group where 21a consists of #1 and a # 4-cylinder, and 21b are exhaust manifolds which connect to individual flueway 2b the exhaust port of a cylinder group which consists of #2 and a # 4-cylinder. With this operation gestalt, the start catalysts (referred to as "SC" below) 5a and 5b which consist of a three way component catalyst are arranged on individual flueway 2a and 2b, respectively. Moreover, individual flueway 2a and 2b join the common flueway 2 by SC downstream.

[0023] NOX later mentioned on the common flueway 2 The occlusion reduction catalyst 7 is arranged. For 29a and 29b showing to drawing 1, it is NOX of a flueway 2 which individual flueway 2a, start catalyst 5a of 2b, the air-fuel ratio sensor arranged at 5b upstream, and 31 show. It is the air-fuel ratio sensor arranged at occlusion reduction catalyst 7 outlet. Let the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a, 29b, and 31 be the so-called linear air-fuel ratio sensors which output the voltage signal corresponding to an exhaust air air-fuel ratio in the large air-fuel ratio range. Furthermore, it is an engine's 1 electronic control unit (ECU) which 30 shows to drawing 1. With this operation gestalt, ECU30 is used as the microcomputer of a well-known configuration of having had RAM, ROM, and CPU, and is performing basic control, such as ignition-timing control of an engine 1 and fuel-injection control. Moreover, at this operation gestalt, ECU30 is NOX further absorbed from the NOX occlusion reduction catalyst 7 while performing control which changes the fuel-injection mode of the cylinder-injection-of-fuel valves 111-114 according to engine operational status, and changes an engine operation air-fuel ratio so that the above-mentioned basic control might be performed and also it might mention later. In order to make it emit, rich spike actuation which switches an short-run air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio is performed during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of an engine. Furthermore, ECU30 performs the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of reducing the amount of oxygen stored

in SCs 5a and 5b on the time of changing an engine operation air-fuel ratio from Lean richly, or the occasion of rich spike actuation.

[0024] The signal with which the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in start catalyst 5a and 5b inlet port is expressed to the input port of ECU30 from the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b, The air-fuel ratio sensor 31 to NOX The signal showing the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in occlusion reduction catalyst 7 outlet Moreover, the signal corresponding to an engine's MAP is inputted, respectively from the intake-pressure sensor 33 formed in the engine inlet manifold which is not illustrated, and also the signal corresponding to an engine rotational frequency is inputted from the rotational frequency sensor 35 arranged near the engine crankshaft (not shown). Furthermore, with this operation gestalt, the signal showing an operator's amount of accelerator pedal treading in (accelerator opening) is inputted into the input port of ECU30 from the accelerator opening sensor 37 arranged near an engine's 1 accelerator pedal (not shown). Moreover, the output port of ECU30 is connected to the fuel injection valves 111-114 of each cylinder through the fuel-injection circuit which is not illustrated, in order to control the fuel oil consumption and fuel injection timing to each cylinder.

[0025] With this operation gestalt, ECU30 operates an engine 1 in the following five combustion modes according to an engine's operational status.

\*\* The Lean air-fuel ratio stratification combustion (one compression stroke injection)

\*\* the Lean air-fuel ratio homogeneity -- gaseous mixture -- /stratification combustion (an intake stroke / two compression stroke injection)

\*\* the Lean air-fuel ratio homogeneity -- gaseous mixture -- combustion (one intake-stroke injection)

\*\* theoretical-air-fuel-ratio homogeneity -- gaseous mixture -- combustion (one intake-stroke injection)

\*\* rich air-fuel ratio homogeneity -- gaseous mixture -- combustion (one intake-stroke injection)

That is, in an engine's 1 light load operating range, the Lean air-fuel ratio stratification combustion of the above-mentioned \*\* is performed. In this condition, the fuel which charge injection of cylinder internal combustion was performed once in the second half of the compression stroke of each cylinder, and was injected forms the layer of combustible gas mixture near the cylinder ignition plug. Moreover, there is very little fuel oil consumption in this operational status, and the air-fuel ratio as the whole inside of a cylinder becomes 25 to about 30.

[0026] moreover -- if a load increases from the condition of the above-mentioned \*\* and it becomes a low-load-driving field -- the above-mentioned \*\* Lean air-fuel ratio homogeneity -- gaseous mixture -- /stratification combustion is performed. The quantity of the fuel injected in a cylinder is increased as an engine load increases, but in stratification combustion of the above-mentioned \*\*, in order to perform fuel injection in the second half of a compression stroke, there is a limitation in the fuel quantity which injection time will be restricted and can be made to stratify. Then, he is trying to supply the fuel of the amount of targets to a cylinder in this load field by injecting beforehand the amount of the fuel which run short only by the fuel injection in the second half of a compression stroke in the first half of an intake stroke. very Lean [ by the time of firing ] fuel [ which was injected in the cylinder in the first half of an intake stroke ] homogeneity -- gaseous mixture is generated. the second half of a compression stroke -- this very Lean homogeneity -- gaseous mixture -- a fuel is injected further and the layer of combustible gas mixture which can be lit near the ignition plug is generated in inside. Combustion stabilized in order that this combustible-gas-mixture layer might start combustion at the time of firing and a flame might spread to a surrounding thin mixed gaseous layer comes to be performed. Although the quantity of the fuel quantity supplied by injection by the intake stroke and the compression stroke is increased from \*\* in this condition, the air-fuel ratio as the whole becomes a little low Lean (it is 20 to about 30 at an air-fuel ratio).

[0027] furthermore -- if an engine load increases -- an engine 1 -- the Lean air-fuel ratio homogeneity of the above-mentioned \*\* -- gaseous mixture -- combustion is performed. In this condition, fuel injection is performed once in the first half of an intake stroke, and the quantity of fuel oil consumption is further increased from the above-mentioned \*\*. the homogeneity generated in a cylinder in this condition -- gaseous mixture serves as the Lean air-fuel ratio (it is 15 to about 25 at an air-fuel ratio) comparatively near theoretical air fuel ratio.

[0028] furthermore, if an engine load increases and it becomes an engine heavy load operating range, a fuel will increase further from the condition of \*\* -- having -- the theoretical-air-fuel-ratio homogeneity of the above-mentioned \*\* -- gaseous mixture -- operation is performed. In this condition, in a cylinder, the homogeneous gaseous mixture of theoretical air fuel ratio comes to be generated, and an engine output increases. furthermore, if an engine load increases and it becomes an engine's full load running, fuel oil consumption will increase further from the condition of \*\* -- having -- the rich air-fuel ratio homogeneity of \*\* -- gaseous mixture -- operation is performed. the homogeneity generated in a cylinder in this condition --

the air-fuel ratio of gaseous mixture -- being rich (it being 12 to about 14 at an air-fuel ratio) -- it becomes. [0029] With this operation gestalt, according to the accelerator opening (an operator's amount of accelerator pedal treading in), and the engine rotational frequency, the optimal operation mode (from the above-mentioned \*\* to \*\*) is beforehand set up based on the experiment etc., and it has stored as a map which used the accelerator opening and the engine rotational frequency for ROM of ECU30. It determines whether ECU30 should choose which operation mode of \*\* from the current above-mentioned \*\* based on the accelerator opening and engine rotational frequency which were detected by the accelerator opening sensor 37 during engine 1 operation, and fuel oil consumption, fuel injection timing, and a count are determined according to each mode.

[0030] That is, when the mode (the Lean air-fuel ratio combustion) of the above-mentioned \*\* to \*\* is chosen, ECU30 determines fuel oil consumption from an accelerator opening and an engine rotational frequency based on the map beforehand prepared for every mode of the above-mentioned \*\* to \*\*. Moreover, when the mode (theoretical air fuel ratio or rich air-fuel ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion) of the above-mentioned \*\* and \*\* is chosen, ECU30 sets up fuel oil consumption based on the MAP and engine rotational frequency which were detected by the intake-pressure sensor 33 based on the map beforehand prepared for every mode of the above-mentioned \*\* and \*\*.

[0031] Moreover, when mode \*\* (theoretical-air-fuel-ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion) is chosen, ECU30 carries out feedback amendment of the fuel oil consumption further computed by the above based on the output of the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b so that an engine exhaust air air-fuel ratio may turn into theoretical air fuel ratio. As mentioned above, in the engine 1 of this operation gestalt, the quantity of fuel oil consumption is increased as an engine load increases, and operation mode is changed according to fuel oil consumption.

[0032] Next, the start catalysts 5a and 5b of this operation gestalt and NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst is explained. Start catalyst (SC) Using support, such as cordierite fabricated in the shape of a honeycomb, 5a and 5b form thin coating of an alumina in this carrier surface, and are constituted as a three way component catalyst which made this alumina layer support precious metal catalyst components, such as Platinum Pt, Palladium Pd, and Rhodium Rh. A three way component catalyst is HC, CO, and NOX near the theoretical air fuel ratio. Three components are purified with a well head. A three way component catalyst is NOX if the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air becomes higher than theoretical air fuel ratio. NOX under exhaust air since reduction capacity declines, when the Lean air-fuel ratio operation of the engine 1 is carried out It cannot fully purify.

[0033] Moreover, in order to be arranged at flueway 2a and the part near the engine 1 of 2b and to reduce heat capacity so that the activity temperature of a catalyst may be reached in a short time after engine start up and a catalysis can be started, let SCs 5a and 5b be the things of small capacity comparatively. Next, O<sub>2</sub> of SCs 5a and 5b A storage function is explained. If exhaust air clarification catalysts, such as a three way component catalyst, are made to support metal components, such as a cerium (Ce), generally in addition to a catalyst component, it is known that an exhaust air clarification catalyst will come to demonstrate an oxygen storage function (O<sub>2</sub> storage function). That is, when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into a catalyst is higher than theoretical air fuel ratio, it combines with the oxygen under exhaust air (when an exhaust air air-fuel ratio is Lean), and the cerium supported by the catalyst as an additive forms Seria (cerium oxide), and stores oxygen. Moreover, when the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust air is below theoretical air fuel ratio, since Seria emits oxygen and returns to a metal cerium, oxygen is emitted (when an exhaust air air-fuel ratio is rich). O<sub>2</sub> With the exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function, since the oxygen under exhaust air is absorbed by the cerium even when the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into a catalyst changes from a rich air-fuel ratio to the Lean air-fuel ratio, the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls. For this reason, while oxygen is absorbed by the cerium, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in a catalyst outlet becomes near the theoretical air fuel ratio. moreover, if the whole quantity of the cerium which a catalyst supports combines with oxygen and it becomes impossible to absorb oxygen more than it (namely, a catalyst -- oxygen -- saturated), the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in an exhaust air clarification outlet will change to the same Lean air-fuel ratio as the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in a catalyst inlet port.

Moreover, similarly, after the cerium has fully absorbed oxygen, if the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into a catalyst changes from the Lean air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio, oxygen will be emitted from a cerium, the oxygen density under exhaust air increases and the air-fuel ratio in a catalyst outlet becomes near the theoretical air fuel ratio. Since oxygen is not emitted from a catalyst any more after the whole quantity of the oxygen combined with the cerium also in this case is emitted, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in a catalyst outlet turns into a rich air-fuel ratio as well as the air-fuel ratio in a catalyst inlet port. That is, an

exhaust air clarification catalyst is O<sub>2</sub>. When it has the storage function, since rich or rich, Lean's change will produce delay from Lean of the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of the catalyst downstream compared with the catalyst upstream.

[0034] SCs 5a and 5b of this operation gestalt are O<sub>2</sub>. Since the storage function is added, when an engine's operation air-fuel ratio changes from Lean richly, delay and the period temporarily maintained by the air-fuel ratio near the theoretical air fuel ratio will produce change of the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in the downstream of SCs 5a and 5b. Next, NOX of this operation gestalt The occlusion reduction catalyst 7 is explained. NOX of this operation gestalt The occlusion reduction catalyst 7 makes an alumina support, and is Potassium K, Sodium Na, Lithium Li, and Caesium Cs on this support. Alkali metal [ like ], Barium Ba, and calcium calcium At least one component chosen from rare earth like an alkaline earth [ like ], Lanthanum La, Cerium Ce, and Yttrium Y and noble metals like Platinum Pt are supported. NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst is nitrate ion NO<sub>3</sub> about NOX under exhaust air (NO<sub>2</sub>, NO), when the air-fuel ratio of the flowing exhaust gas is Lean. - NOX which absorbed in the form, and was absorbed when inflow exhaust gas became rich NOX to emit An absorption/emission action is performed.

[0035] It becomes the same mechanism even if it uses other noble metals, alkali metal, an alkaline earth, and rare earth, although the mechanism of this absorption/emission is explained taking the case of the case where Platinum Pt and Barium Ba are used, below. if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air increases (namely, -- if the air-fuel ratio of exhaust air turns into the Lean air-fuel ratio) -- these oxygen -- Platinum Pt top -- O<sub>2</sub>- or the form of O<sub>2</sub>- adhering -- NOX under exhaust air O<sub>2</sub>- on Platinum Pt or O<sub>2</sub>- reacting -- thereby -- NO<sub>2</sub> It is generated. Moreover, NO<sub>2</sub> under inflow exhaust air And NO<sub>2</sub> generated by the above It is nitrate ion NO<sub>3</sub>, being absorbed in an absorbent and combining with the barium oxide BaO oxidizing further on Platinum Pt. - It is spread in an absorbent in a form. For this reason, under lean atmosphere, it is NOX under exhaust air. NOX It comes to be absorbed in the form of a nitrate in an absorbent.

[0036] moreover -- if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls substantially (namely, -- if the air-fuel ratio of exhaust air turns into theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio) -- NO<sub>2</sub> on Platinum Pt in order that the amount of generation may decrease -- a reaction -- hard flow -- progressing -- coming -- nitrate ion NO<sub>3</sub>- in an absorbent NO<sub>2</sub> It comes to be emitted from an absorbent in a form. in this case, under exhaust air -- reduction components, such as CO, HC, and CO<sub>2</sub> etc. -- if a component exists -- Platinum Pt top -- these components -- NO<sub>2</sub> It is returned.

[0037] It is NOX, when the engine 1 in which the Lean air-fuel ratio operation is possible is used with this operation gestalt and the engine 1 is operated with the Lean air-fuel ratio. An occlusion reduction catalyst is NOX under flowing exhaust air. It absorbs. Moreover, it is NOX if an engine 1 is operated with a rich air-fuel ratio. The occlusion reduction catalyst 7 is absorbed NOX. Reduction clarification is emitted and carried out. At this operation gestalt, it is NOX during the Lean air-fuel ratio operation. NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 If an amount increases, rich spike operation which switches a short-time engine air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio is performed, and it is NOX. NOX from an occlusion reduction catalyst It is made to perform bleedoff and reduction clarification (NOX playback of an occlusion reduction catalyst). At this operation gestalt, ECU30 is NOX. It is NOX by fluctuating the value of a counter. NOX in which the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 is carrying out absorption maintenance An amount is presumed. NOX NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 per unit time amount An amount is NOX. NOX under exhaust air which flows into an occlusion reduction catalyst per unit time amount NOX generated by per unit time amount with an amount 1, i.e., an engine, It is proportional to an amount. NOX generated in per unit time amount in an engine on the other hand An amount will be NOX if an engine service condition becomes settled, since it becomes settled with the amount of fuel supply to an engine, an air-fuel ratio, an exhaust air flow rate, etc. NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst An amount can be known. NOX which changes engine service conditions (an accelerator opening, an engine rotational frequency, an inhalation air content, a MAP, an air-fuel ratio, the amount of fuel supply, etc.) beforehand, and an engine generates in per unit time amount with this operation gestalt An amount is surveyed and it is NOX. NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 per unit time amount The amount is stored in ROM of ECU30 in the form of the numerical map using for example, an engine load (fuel oil consumption) and an engine rotational frequency. ECU30 uses this map from an engine load (fuel oil consumption) and an engine rotational frequency for every (every above-mentioned unit time amount) fixed time amount, and is NOX to per unit time amount. NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst An amount is computed and it is NOX. It is this NOX about a counter. Only an absorbed amount is increased. Thereby, it is NOX. The value of a counter is always NOX. NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 It comes to express an amount. ECU30 is Above NOX during the Lean air-

fuel ratio operation of an engine. When the value of a counter increases beyond a predetermined value, rich spike actuation of operating a short-time (for example, about 0.5 to 1 second) engine in the mode (theoretical air fuel ratio or rich air-fuel ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion) of the above-mentioned \*\* or \*\* is performed. Thereby, it is NOX. NOX absorbed from the occlusion reduction catalyst Reduction clarification is emitted and carried out. In addition, the time amount which holds an exhaust air air-fuel ratio richly by rich spike is NOX in a detail. It is determined by experiment etc. based on the class of occlusion reduction catalyst, capacity, etc. Moreover, a rich spike is performed and it is NOX. An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX after reduction clarification was emitted and carried out. The value of a counter is reset by 0. Thus, NOX NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 By performing a rich spike according to an absorbed amount, it is NOX. It is reproduced appropriately and the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 is NOX. NOX which the occlusion reduction catalyst absorbed Being saturated is prevented. [0038] However, at this operation gestalt, it is NOX as mentioned above. It is O<sub>2</sub> to the flueway of the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 upstream. SCs 5a and 5b which have a storage function are formed. For this reason, even if exhaust air of a rich air-fuel ratio flows into SCs 5a and 5b from an engine at the time of a rich spike, it is NOX of SC5a and 5b lower stream of a river. While the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 has bleedoff of the oxygen in SCs 5a and 5b, the case where exhaust air of the Lean air-fuel ratio near the theoretical air fuel ratio flows arises, and it is NOX immediately after rich spike initiation. NOX which is not purified from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 It may flow out. Moreover, it is NOX immediately after switching, also when an engine's operation air-fuel ratio is similarly switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio (operation mode of the above-mentioned \*\* or \*\*) by change of an engine's 1 service condition from the Lean air-fuel ratio (operation mode of the above-mentioned \*\* to \*\*). NOX which is not purified from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 Runoff may arise.

[0039] Then, it is O<sub>2</sub> of Above 5a and SCs 5b by making rich the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into SCs 5a and 5b beforehand in case an engine air-fuel ratio is switched to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio with the operation gestalt explained below for rich spike actuation, an operation mode switch, etc. The problem produced by storage is solved. Exhaust air containing a lot of HC and CO components flows into SCs 5a and 5b by making into a rich air-fuel ratio the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into SCs 5a and 5b. For this reason, O<sub>2</sub> The oxygen stored by storage in the catalyst is consumed although HC under exhaust air and CO component are oxidized, and bleedoff of the oxygen from a catalyst ends it for a short time. Moreover, Above HC and the amount of CO components are O<sub>2</sub> by setting up more mostly than the amount which consumes the whole quantity of the oxygen emitted from a catalyst. Also while oxygen is emitted by the storage function from the catalyst, exhaust air of SC5a and 5b downstream comes to be maintained by the rich air-fuel ratio. Thereby, it is NOX. NOX which is not purified from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 Flowing out is prevented.

[0040] As storage oxygen reduction actuation which makes the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into SCs 5a and 5b at the time of an engine air-fuel ratio switch a rich air-fuel ratio For example, (A) Inject a fuel in a cylinder from the cylinder-injection-of-fuel valve of each cylinder at the time of a cylinder expansion stroke or an exhaust stroke (henceforth "secondary fuel injection"). (B) (C) which prepares the exhaust port fuel injection valve which injects a fuel in the exhaust port of each cylinder, and injects fuel injection to an engine exhaust port (henceforth "exhaust port injection") There are approaches, such as making an engine combustion air-fuel ratio rich substantially temporarily, at the time of an engine air-fuel ratio switch. Above (A) (B) By the approach, the fuel injected by expansion, exhaust stroke, and exhaust port of a cylinder is evaporated without burning, and generates a lot of HC and CO components during exhaust air. That is, these fuels have the advantage which fluctuation of an engine output etc. does not produce, even when comparatively a lot of fuels are supplied, in order not to contribute to combustion. On the other hand, in order not to contribute these fuels to combustion, when the engine is operated with the Lean air-fuel ratio, comparatively a lot of oxygen remains in exhaust air. That is, when the fuel which is not contributed to combustion as mentioned above is supplied to an engine, although the air-fuel ratio of exhaust air turns into a rich air-fuel ratio as a whole, during exhaust air, unreacted oxygen, and HC and CO component will exist independently. For this reason, these oxygen, and HC and CO component may produce a reaction on SC5a and 5b, and the temperature of SCs 5a and 5b may rise too much depending on a service condition.

[0041] Moreover, the above (C) Although most unreacted oxygen under exhaust air is lost and the problem of overheating of SCs 5a and 5b is not produced by the approach since an engine's combustion air-fuel ratio itself turns into a large rich air-fuel ratio temporarily, engine generating torque may increase by combustion of a lot of fuels, and output-torque fluctuation may arise depending on an engine's operational status. therefore, the above (A) from -- (C) As for any of an approach are taken, it is desirable to choose according

to an engine's property and operational status.

[0042] In addition, the above (B) (exhaust port fuel injection) When applying an approach, it is the above (A) (secondary fuel injection). Since it becomes being almost the same as that of a case, at the following operation gestalten, it is the above (A). (C) Suppose that it explains taking the case of the case where an approach is applied.

(1) The 1st operation gestalt drawing 2 is a flow chart explaining the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b in the 1st operation gestalt of this invention. This actuation is performed by ECU30 for every (every [ for example, ] crankshaft fixed angle of rotation) predetermined spacing.

[0043] The time of the operation air-fuel ratio switch to the theoretical air fuel ratio or rich air-fuel ratio operation from the Lean air-fuel ratio operation according to service-condition change of an engine by actuation of drawing 2, and NOX NOX from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 The amount of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b is reduced by injecting a fuel from the charge injection valve of cylinder internal combustion to expansion or the exhaust stroke of each cylinder, just before switching an engine's operation air-fuel ratio at the time of the rich spike actuation for bleedoff. That is, at this operation gestalt, it is O<sub>2</sub> from SCs 5a and 5b. After the oxygen bleedoff by the storage function is completed, he is trying to switch an engine's operation air-fuel ratio.

[0044] Since the oxygen bleedoff from SCs 5a and 5b does not arise by this when an engine's operation air-fuel ratio is switched to Rich (or theoretical air fuel ratio) from Lean, it is NOX. The air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air which flows into the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 comes to change from the Lean air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio (or theoretical air fuel ratio) promptly, and is NOX. NOX which is not purified from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 Bleedoff is prevented.

[0045] if actuation starts in drawing 2 -- the accelerator opening sensor 37 above-mentioned at step 201 to the accelerator opening (an operator's amount of accelerator pedal treading in) ACCP -- moreover, the amount OSC of storage oxygen of the engine rotational frequencies 5a and SC [ NE and ] 5b computed based on the output of the rotational frequency sensor 35 is read, respectively. In addition, calculation of the amount OSC of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b is explained in full detail behind.

[0046] Subsequently, it is based on the accelerator opening ACCP and the engine rotational frequency NE which were read by the above at step 203, and is the optimal operation mode M1 among the operation modes of the above-mentioned \*\* to \*\*. It is chosen. With this operation gestalt, the optimal operation mode in each accelerator opening and an engine rotational frequency considers as the numerical table using the accelerator opening ACCP and the rotational frequency NE as a parameter, and is stored in ROM of ECU30, and ECU30 chooses the optimal operation mode (\*\*-\*\*) from this numerical table based on ACCP and NE which were read at step 201. The value of M 1 (M1 =\*\* - \*\*) in step 203 is seen from a current engine service condition, and expresses the optimal operation mode (namely, operation mode which serves as a target of switch actuation at step 223 mentioned later).

[0047] Subsequently, operation mode M0 current at step 205 It is judged whether it is the Lean air-fuel ratio operation (either of the modes of the above-mentioned \*\* to \*\*). M0 It is the parameter which means whether the engine is operated in which operation mode of current \*\* to \*\* (M0 =\*\* - \*\*). When current theoretical air fuel ratio or rich air-fuel ratio operation is performed if current Lean air-fuel ratio operation is not performed at step 205 namely Target operation mode M1 Even if it is any of \*\* to \*\*, a switch of the air-fuel ratio from the Lean air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio (or theoretical air fuel ratio) is not produced, but it is NOX. NOX which is not purified from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 Since it cannot flow out, Step 223 is performed promptly and an engine's operation mode is the target operation mode M1. It is switched (the current mode is continued when operated by current target operation mode). And operation mode M0 current at step 225 after the completion of a switch It is updated by the value according to the operation mode after a switch (M 1).

[0048] On the other hand, when the engine is operated by the operation mode of current \*\* to \*\* at step 205, it is NOX at step 207 now. The occlusion reduction catalyst 7 to NOX It is judged based on the value of the rich spike flag FR whether the rich spike actuation activation for making it emit is demanded. As mentioned above, at this operation gestalt, ECU30 is based on engine operational status by the routine which is performed separately and which is not illustrated, and is NOX. NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 NOX showing an amount The value of Counter CNOX is integrated, and when the value of Counter CNOX increases exceeding a predetermined value, the value of the rich spike flag FR is set to 1. Since it is necessary to perform the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen (steps 213-217) mentioned later when current rich spike actuation is demanded at step 207, actuation progresses to the direct step 211. Moreover, when current rich spike actuation is not demanded, it is the target operation mode M1 at

step 209 next. It is judged whether they are a rich air-fuel ratio or theoretical-air-fuel-ratio operation (mode \*\* or \*\*). Target operation mode M1 When it is not any of mode \*\* and \*\*, either, since the switch to rich air-fuel ratio operation from the Lean air-fuel ratio operation is not produced in this case, either, it progresses to step 223 and a switch in the target mode of operation mode is performed.

[0049] On the other hand, since it is necessary to switch an engine operation air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio (or theoretical air fuel ratio) from the Lean air-fuel ratio when it is FR=1 (rich spike demand) at step 207, and when target operation mode is \*\* or \*\* at step 209 namely, it progresses to step 211 and judges whether the amount reduction actuation of current oxygen was completed. And when reduction actuation is not completed, secondary fuel injection for the amount reduction of oxygen of steps 213-217 (expansion or charge injection of cylinder internal combustion in an exhaust stroke) is performed, and the fuel which is not contributed to combustion is supplied to a cylinder.

[0050] Namely, SC5a read at step 201 in step 213, While calculating sum total fuel quantity (the amount of HC) required to consume the whole quantity of the oxygen stored in SCs 5a and 5b, and maintain exhaust air of SC5a and 5b downstream from theoretical air fuel ratio from the current amount OSC of storage oxygen of 5b to a rich side The secondary fuel oil consumption which divides by the count of secondary fuel-injection activation (after-mentioned) which was able to define this sum total fuel quantity beforehand, and is needed for per time is computed. And in step 215, it is judged whether it is the timing which sets the secondary fuel oil consumption of one of current cylinders, and when it is set timing, the computed secondary fuel oil consumption is set to a fuel-injection circuit at step 217. Thereby, if it becomes secondary fuel-injection timing (expansion or exhaust stroke), secondary fuel injection will be performed in each cylinder. In addition, it is judged with the amount reduction actuation of oxygen having been completed at step 211 by only the count (cylinder number) appointed beforehand, when secondary fuel injection was performed, and 219 or less step is performed.

[0051] Namely, after the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen is completed and the oxygen bleedoff from SCs 5a and 5b is completed It is judged whether it is that step 219 requires current rich spike actuation (FR=1). If rich spike actuation is demanded, when rich spike actuation is performed and is not demanded at step 221, the switch to target operation mode M 1 (in this case, rich or theoretical-air-fuel-ratio operation mode) is performed at step 223.

[0052] in addition -- rich spike actuation of step 221 -- an engine -- NOX until the value of Counter CNOX is set to 0 -- the rich air-fuel ratio homogeneity of mode \*\* -- gaseous mixture -- it operates by combustion -- having -- NOX NOX absorbed by the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 Reduction clarification of the whole quantity is emitted and carried out. Next, the count of the secondary fuel injection in this operation gestalt is explained. this operation gestalt -- secondary fuel injection -- # -- 1 or 4 cylinder groups and # -- either of 1 time is performed [ groups / 2 or 3 / cylinder ] about 1 time each or all the cylinders of #1 to #4. When it can be alike, respectively, it can attach and the amount of storage oxygen of SC can be reduced by one secondary fuel injection, secondary fuel injection is performed once per each cylinder group. since [ namely, ] the capacity of SCs 5a and 5b is comparatively small -- each SCs 5a and 5b -- The capacity of SCs 5a and 5b is comparatively large, in the secondary fuel injection which is 1 time, when the amount of storage oxygen cannot fully be reduced, lessons is taken from each SCs 5a and 5b, and two secondary (namely, every 1 time per all cylinders of #1 to #4) fuel injection is performed, respectively. It is beforehand determined according to the capacity of SCs 5a and 5b whether to perform which secondary fuel injection. In addition, it is judged with since each cylinder group consisted of cylinders which firing order does not follow, the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen having completed it, when 1-time secondary fuel injection was performed for every cylinder group, and secondary fuel injection was performed by a unit of 1 (for example, #1, #3 or #3, and #2 grade) time in two cylinders of the firing order which continued at the above-mentioned step 211.

[0053] Moreover, as mentioned above, with this operation gestalt, the operation mode (from \*\* to \*\*) of the Lean air-fuel ratio is continued by the engine during the amount reduction actuation activation of storage oxygen.

(2) Explain the 2nd operation gestalt, next the 2nd operation gestalt of this invention. With the operation gestalt of the above 1st, operation mode to rich air-fuel ratio operation was not switched until it performed the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b and the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen (secondary fuel injection) was completed only by secondary fuel injection. With this operation gestalt, in all cylinders, in the engine which needs secondary fuel injection by a unit of 1 time By the timing out of which the switch command to rich air-fuel ratio operation mode from the Lean air-fuel ratio operation mode came While switching to intake-stroke fuel injection about the cylinder of the timing

which can perform an operation mode switch (shift to intake-stroke fuel injection), only the amount of secondary fuel oil consumption increases the quantity of intake-stroke fuel oil consumption. Secondary fuel injection is performed about the cylinder for which the shift to intake-stroke fuel injection is not enough. [0054] Drawing 3 is drawing explaining the secondary fuel injection ( drawing 3 shows the example which carries out secondary fuel injection from the telophase of an expansion stroke to the early stages of an exhaust stroke) of this operation gestalt, and the timing of intake-stroke fuel-injection loading. Drawing 3 is mode \*\* (although the timing of the switch to mode \*\* (theoretical-air-fuel-ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion (intake-stroke injection)) from the Lean stratification combustion (one compression stroke injection) is shown, the switch between other modes also becomes being the same as that of drawing 3.).

[0055] Drawing 3 shows the fuel-oil-consumption set timing for performing each fuel-injection timing and its fuel injection of # 4-cylinder from #1. drawing 3 -- setting -- CSET -- in secondary fuel-oil-consumption set timing and EXINJ, secondary fuel-injection activation timing and ISET show intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing, and, as for compression stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing and CINJ, IINJ shows [ compression stroke fuel-injection activation timing and EXSET ] intake-stroke fuel-injection activation timing, respectively. Moreover, that CH shows to drawing 3 shows the amount reduction actuation initiation timing of storage oxygen for an operation mode switch. Moreover, in drawing 3 , "\*\*\*\*", "\*\*\*\*", "\*\*\*\*", and "\*\*\*\*" express the intake stroke of each cylinder, the compression stroke, the expansion stroke, and the exhaust stroke, respectively. As shown in drawing 3 , with this operation gestalt, secondary fuel oil consumption is set to the telophase of a compression stroke (EXSET), and intake-stroke fuel oil consumption is set in early stages of an exhaust stroke (ISET).

[0056] Supposing the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of the catalyst for an operation mode switch is now started to the timing of drawing 3 CH, since CH corresponds in the middle of a compression stroke, intake-stroke fuel-injection timing (IINJ) will already have finished with # 1 cylinder, and the set of compression stroke fuel oil consumption will have been completed to Timing CSET by it. Therefore, in # 1 cylinder, since a change-over of \*\*\*\*\* cannot be performed promptly, as performing as it is, the compression stroke fuel injection IINJ sets secondary fuel oil consumption to Timing EXSET, and performs secondary fuel injection (EXINJ).

[0057] On the other hand, to this timing, although the timing of CH corresponds in the middle of an intake stroke in # 3 cylinder, since intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing has passed, it cannot already shift to intake-stroke fuel injection promptly. For this reason, in # 3 cylinder, while setting compression stroke fuel oil consumption by CSET as performing compression stroke fuel injection as it is, suppose that secondary fuel oil consumption is set to the secondary fuel-oil-consumption set timing (EXSET) of the subsequent telophase of a compression stroke, and secondary fuel injection is performed.

[0058] Moreover, similarly, in # 4-cylinder, although the timing of CH corresponds in the middle of an exhaust stroke, since intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing (IINJ) has passed also in this case, it cannot shift to intake-stroke fuel injection promptly. Therefore, secondary fuel injection (EXINJ) is performed, continuing compression stroke fuel injection (CINJ) like # 3 cylinder.

[0059] On the other hand, in # 2 cylinder, since the timing of CH corresponds in the middle of an expansion stroke, it cannot reach yet intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing (ISET), but can shift to intake-stroke fuel injection. So, in # 2 cylinder, while switching operation mode and performing intake-stroke fuel injection, only the amount of secondary fuel oil consumption increases the quantity of the fuel oil consumption set by ISET. That is, a switch of operation mode is performed, without performing secondary fuel injection about # 2 cylinder, instead an equivalent for secondary fuel oil consumption is added to the intake-stroke fuel oil consumption immediately after an operation mode switch, and fuel oil consumption is set up.

[0060] So that the timing chart of drawing 3 may show After the amount reduction actuation of catalyst storage oxygen for an operation mode switch beginning with this operation gestalt, Although secondary fuel injection is performed, continuing compression stroke fuel injection about the cylinder (1 the case of drawing 3 # 3, # 4-cylinder) which secondary fuel-oil-consumption set timing becomes ahead of intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing (namely, \*\* which does not switch operation mode) Operation mode is switched about the cylinder (# 2 cylinder) which intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing becomes ahead of secondary fuel-oil-consumption set timing, and he performs intake-stroke fuel injection, and is trying to increase the quantity of the fuel of secondary fuel oil consumption of other cylinders at the time of intake-stroke fuel injection. In addition, when loading of secondary fuel injection or intake-stroke fuel oil consumption is performed by a unit of 1 time in all cylinders also in this case, the amount reduction

actuation of storage oxygen of a catalyst is ended, and operation mode is switched in all cylinders after that. [0061] That is, with this operation gestalt, it will be started before an operation mode switch (#1, #3, # 4-cylinder), and quantity-to-be-stored reduction actuation of a catalyst will be ended after an operation mode switch (# 2 cylinder). Thereby, operation mode switching time can be shortened. Drawing 4 is a flow chart explaining the above-mentioned amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of this operation gestalt. Actuation of drawing 4 is performed as a routine performed by ECU30 for every predetermined spacing. Only the point that the flow chart of drawing 4 permuted steps 213-217 of the flow chart of drawing 2 at steps 413-421 is different from the flow chart of drawing 2. So, only a point of difference is explained here. [0062] At step 413, the amount of one secondary fuel injection is set up like the drawing 2 step 213 from the amount OSC of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b, and the amount which added the secondary and fuel oil consumption computed at step 413 to the intake-stroke fuel oil consumption after an operation mode switch by step 419 when it was in the set timing (drawing 3 ISET) of the present intake-stroke fuel oil consumption at step 415, and increased is set as intake-stroke fuel oil consumption. Moreover, when there is nothing to intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set timing, the set of secondary fuel oil consumption is performed at step 417 and step 421. Thereby, in the cylinder which is enough for the set timing (ISET) of intake-stroke fuel oil consumption, switch of operation mode and loading of fuel oil consumption come to be performed instead of secondary fuel injection.

[0063] In addition, although this operation gestalt is performing reduction actuation of the amount of storage oxygen by performing secondary fuel injection in cylinders other than the cylinder which is enough for the set timing of intake-stroke fuel injection, you may make it only the amount of secondary fuel oil consumption increase the quantity of intake-stroke fuel oil consumption like # 2 cylinder of the above [ each cylinder / timing / following / intake-stroke fuel-oil-consumption set ], without performing secondary fuel injection. In this case, the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of a catalyst will be performed immediately after an operation mode switch in each cylinder.

[0064] (3) Explain the 3rd operation gestalt, next the 3rd operation gestalt of this invention. In the case of an engine operation mode switch, operation mode is switched after the amount reduction actuation termination of storage oxygen of a catalyst, and reduction actuation is performed [ the 1st above-mentioned operation gestalt ] immediately after an operation mode switch in some of cylinders or all cylinders by the 2nd operation gestalt. On the other hand, with this operation gestalt, the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen is independently performed with a switch of operation mode. That is, in each cylinder, it carries out usually through a switch of operation mode, and regardless of operation mode, secondary fuel injection is performed until a switch of the operation mode of each cylinder is completed. Although it may be necessary to shift to rich air-fuel ratio combustion of \*\* (rich air-fuel ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion (one intake-stroke injection)) in sudden acceleration etc. by actual operation from the very Lean combustion condition of for example, mode \*\* (the Lean air-fuel ratio stratification combustion (one compression stroke injection)), if operation mode is switched at \*\* from direct \*\* in such a case, rapid fluctuation of an output torque may arise for the abrupt change of a combustion air-fuel ratio. Then, operation mode may once be switched to \*\* via mode \*\* to \*\* (the Lean air-fuel ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture /stratification combustion (an intake stroke / two compression stroke injection)), and \*\* (the Lean air-fuel ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion (one intake-stroke injection)), without switching direct operation mode at \*\* from mode \*\* in such a case.

[0065] With this operation gestalt, at the time of an operation mode switch, switch actuation of the above-mentioned \*\*->\*\*->\*\*->\*\* etc. is performed independently, and it is made to perform secondary fuel injection till the completion of a mode switch simultaneously. That is, with this operation gestalt, switch of operation mode and the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of a catalyst will be performed in parallel. It is prevented that operation mode switching time is influenced by the amount reduction actuation activation of storage oxygen by this.

[0066] Drawing 5 is a flow chart explaining the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of the catalyst of this operation gestalt. This actuation is performed as a routine performed by ECU30 at intervals of predetermined. In drawing 5, steps 501-509 show the same actuation as steps 201-209 of drawing 2. When there is no switch of the operation mode from the Lean air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio, also in this operation gestalt, it progresses to step 523 promptly at steps 501-509, and is the target operation mode M1. Current operation mode M0 Mode switch actuation in which it responded is performed.

[0067] On the other hand, when a switch of the operation mode to rich air-fuel ratio operation from the Lean air-fuel ratio operation is needed at steps 501-509 step 511 -- progressing -- target operation mode M1 Current operation mode M0 from -- M0 ->M1 Based on the number of cycles which shift takes, it is

computed how many times activation [ secondary fuel injection ] is possible, and the secondary fuel oil consumption per time is computed from the count of secondary fuel-injection activation, and the present amount OSC of catalyst storage oxygen. Secondary fuel oil consumption is computed as an amount which consumes the whole quantity of the oxygen emitted from SCs 5a and 5b, and can generate only HC which maintains exhaust air of SC5a and 5b downstream to a rich air-fuel ratio.

[0068] And after secondary fuel-oil-consumption calculation, at steps 513-521, secondary fuel injection is performed until a switch of operation mode is completed. Moreover, at steps 521 and 523, it is concurrent with secondary fuel injection at this time, and they are the shift (step 521) to rich spike actuation, and the current operation mode M0. Target operation mode M1 Shift actuation to which it responded is performed. And if shift actuation of step 513 or step 521 is completed, at step 513, it will be judged with the mode switch having been completed and secondary fuel injection will be suspended.

[0069] Next, the presumed approach of the amount OSC of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b used with each above-mentioned operation gestalt for secondary fuel-oil-consumption calculation is explained. With this operation gestalt, the amount OSC of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b is computed from the exhaust air air-fuel ratio AF of SC5a, SC5a detected by the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b arranged at 5b inlet port, and 5b inlet port, and the engine inhalation air mass flow (a gram/second) GA.

[0070] As mentioned above, O<sub>2</sub> of a catalyst The oxygen which the surplus oxygen under exhaust air was absorbed for the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which flows into SCs 5a and 5b by SCs 5a and 5b from theoretical air fuel ratio at the time of Lean, and was absorbed from SCs 5a and 5b by the storage function when more rich than theoretical air fuel ratio is emitted, and also when it is which, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio in SC5a and 5b outlets becomes near the theoretical air fuel ratio. Therefore, the amount of oxygen emitted to SCs 5a and 5b from absorption or SCs 5a and 5b is equivalent to the amount of oxygen required in order to make exhaust air of an air-fuel ratio AF into theoretical air fuel ratio.

[0071] It will become  $GA = AF \times F$  supposing the weight of air required in order to burn the fuel of a certain amount F and to generate exhaust air of an air-fuel ratio AF now is GA. Moreover, it will become  $GA' = ST \times F$  if air weight required in order to burn the fuel of the same amount F and to generate exhaust air of theoretical air fuel ratio ST is made into GA'. On the other hand, it is an oxygen density in air AO<sub>2</sub>. If it carries out, into weight GA and the air of GA', it will become AO<sub>2</sub> xGA and AO<sub>2</sub> xGA', respectively. That is, the amount of oxygen required in order to burn the fuel of a certain amount F and to generate exhaust air of theoretical air fuel ratio ST serves as AO<sub>2</sub> xGA' = AO<sub>2</sub> xSTxF. The amount of oxygen at the time of burning the same fuel on the other hand, and generating exhaust air of an air-fuel ratio AF serves as AO<sub>2</sub> xGA = AO<sub>2</sub> xAFxF. Therefore, when it carries out to the amount of oxygen needed in order to make exhaust air of an air-fuel ratio AF into theoretical air fuel ratio, i.e., AF > ST, the amount of oxygen absorbed by SCs 5a and 5b becomes (AO<sub>2</sub> xGA) - (AO<sub>2</sub> xGA') = AO<sub>2</sub> xFx (AF-ST). Moreover, since it is F = GA/AF, bleedoff/absorbed amount of oxygen become AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX(AF-ST)/AF = AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX(deltaAF/AF) after all. Here, it is deltaAF = (AF-ST). Moreover, since GA is the air flow rate of per unit time amount (second), if it is AF > ST, the oxygen of AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX (deltaAF/AF) will be absorbed by the catalyst per unit time amount during engine operation, and, as for the amount OSC of storage oxygen of a catalyst, only AO<sub>2</sub> xGA x (deltaAF/AF) will increase. (If it is AF < ST, deltaAF will be subtracted and the amount OSC of storage oxygen of a catalyst will decrease).

[0072] Therefore, although the variation of the amount OSC of storage oxygen of per time amount deltat of SCs 5a and 5b is set to AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX(deltaAF/AF) xdeltat when exhaust air air-fuel ratios are [ AF and inhalation air mass flow ] originally GA(s) Actually, in order that the variation of OSC may receive effect in the oxygen absorption/emission rate of a catalyst, actual OSC variation is expressed as AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX (deltaAF/AF) xdeltatxK (correction factor based on an oxygen absorption/emission rate in K). Moreover, actually, the absorption/emission rate of oxygen receives effect in whenever [ catalyst temperature ], and becomes so large that whenever [ catalyst temperature ] is high. Furthermore, absorption of oxygen differs in a rate from bleedoff, and the rate of absorption of oxygen is higher than a bleedoff rate. Therefore, with this operation gestalt, the variation of per time amount deltat of OSC is divided into the case of absorption (AF >= ST) and bleedoff (AF < ST), and it expresses with the following formulas.

[0073] absorption (AF >= ST): -- AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX(deltaAF/AF) xdeltatxA bleedoff (AF < ST): -- AO<sub>2</sub> xGAX (deltaAF/AF) xdeltatxB -- here, A and B are correction factors which become settled by whenever [ absorption/emission rate or catalyst temperature ]. [ of oxygen ] Drawing 6 is a flow chart explaining the amount calculation actuation of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b in this operation gestalt. This actuation is performed by the routine performed with the fixed time interval which is equivalent to the above-mentioned deltat with ECU30. In this actuation, the variation of the amount OSC of storage oxygen of per time amount

deltat of SCs 5a and 5b was computed using the above-mentioned formula, and the amount OSC of storage oxygen of present SCs 5a and 5b is presumed by integrating this variation from the time of engine start up. [0074] By actuation of drawing 6, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio [ of SC5a and 5b inlet port ] AF, inhalation air mass-flow [ of an engine ] GA and SC5a, and 5b temperature TCAT is first read at step 601. With this operation gestalt, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio AF is called for as the average of the exhaust air air-fuel ratio detected by the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b of SC5a and 5b inlet port. Moreover, the inhalation air mass flow GA is computed as a product of the fuel quantity (fuel oil consumption) supplied to an engine per unit time amount, and the exhaust air air-fuel ratio AF. Moreover, the temperature TCAT of SCs 5a and 5b may arrange and measure a temperature sensor to a catalyst bed, asks for the relation between an engine load (fuel oil consumption), a rotational frequency, and an exhaust-gas temperature beforehand, may compute an exhaust-gas temperature based on engine fuel oil consumption (engine load) and a rotational frequency, and may use this exhaust-gas temperature as TCAT in approximation.

[0075] Since it is computed at step 603 whether it is  $AF >= ST$  ( $ST$  is theoretical air fuel ratio), the present exhaust air clarification catalyst is absorbing oxygen in being  $AF >= ST$  and the amount OSC of storage oxygen is increasing after reading AF, GA, and TCAT by the above, a correction factor A is computed from TCAT at step 605 the oxygen absorption rate of SCs 5a and 5b, and whenever [ catalyst temperature ]. And only in  $(AO_2 \times GAx(\Delta AF/AF) \times \Delta t x A)$ , at step 607, the value of the amount OSC of storage oxygen increases. And at step 609, the value of OSC after buildup is Maximum OSCMAX. The value of OSC is OSCMAX when exceeding. It is set up. OSCMAX It is the amount of the maximum oxygen (saturation content) which can store SCs 5a and 5b.

[0076] On the other hand, when it is  $AF < ST$  at step 603, since SCs 5a and 5b are emitting current oxygen, based on TCAT, a correction factor B is computed an oxygen bleedoff rate and whenever [ catalyst temperature ] at step 613, and, only in  $(AO_2 \times GAx(\Delta AF/AF) \times \Delta t x B)$ , the value of OSC increases at step 615 (in this case, since it is  $\Delta AF < 0$ , OSC decreases). And at steps 617 and 619, the value of OSC is restricted at the minimum value 0, and this actuation is ended. In addition, the initial value of OSC [ in / in the time of engine start up / steps 607 and 615 ] is OSCMAX. It is set up. At the time of an engine halt, it has been SC5a and 5b atmospheric-air ambient atmosphere (Lean air-fuel ratio), and SCs 5a and 5b are because it is saturated with oxygen.

[0077] By computing fuel quantity required for the amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b using the amount OSC of storage oxygen of the catalyst presumed by actuation of drawing 6, with each above-mentioned operation gestalt, the exact amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen is performed, and it is NOX at the time of a switch of the engine operation mode from the Lean air-fuel ratio to a rich air-fuel ratio. NOX which is not purified from the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 Flowing out is prevented.

[0078] Next, the amount OSCMAX of saturation oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b used for actuation of drawing 6 using drawing 9 from drawing 7 Amendment is explained. By actuation of drawing 6, it is the amount OSCMAX of saturation oxygen. Although you may make it compute the amount OSC of storage oxygen by considering as proper constant value, it responds to degradation of a catalyst more at accuracy, and it is OSCMAX. It is desirable to amend a value. O<sub>2</sub> storage function of a catalyst is the amount OSCMAX of the maximum oxygen (saturation content) which falls with degradation of a catalyst and can store a catalyst. It falls and goes. Then, the degradation condition of a catalyst is distinguished with this operation gestalt, a degradation condition is embraced, and it is OSCMAX. A value is amended.

[0079] The distinction approach of the degradation condition of a catalyst is explained first. At this operation gestalt, it is the locus length and NOX of an output signal curve of SC5a and 5b upstream. The degradation condition of a catalyst is judged based on the locus length of the air-fuel ratio sensor 31 output-signal curve of the occlusion reduction catalyst 7 downstream. [ of the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b ] Drawing 7 R> 7 shows the general wave of the air-fuel ratio sensor output VOM prepared in the exhaust air clarification catalyst upstream when feedback control of the engine air-fuel ratio is carried out to theoretical air fuel ratio, and the air-fuel ratio sensor output VOS prepared in the catalyst downstream. It sets to drawing 7 and is (A). O<sub>2</sub> of an exhaust air clarification catalyst About a wave when a storage function is high, it is drawing 7 (B). O<sub>2</sub> The wave when a storage function falls is shown, respectively.

[0080] Drawing 7 (A) (B) In the condition that feedback control is carried out to theoretical air fuel ratio, an engine air-fuel ratio (exhaust air air-fuel ratio) is changed to Lean in the comparatively small range focusing on theoretical air fuel ratio as it is rich, so that it may be shown. For this reason, the upstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOM shows fluctuation periodic as a core for theoretical air fuel ratio. In this case, O<sub>2</sub> of a catalyst If a storage function is fully high, even if it changes somewhat the exhaust air air-fuel ratio which

flows into a catalyst considering theoretical air fuel ratio as a core, the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of a catalyst outlet will be maintained near the theoretical air fuel ratio. For this reason, with a catalyst with O<sub>2</sub> storage function high enough, the downstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOS is seldom changed, as shown in drawing 7 (A). Therefore, as for the die length in alignment with the locus of an output VOS, LOVS becomes comparatively small. However, a catalyst deteriorates and it is O<sub>2</sub>. Since the amount of oxygen absorption/emission of a catalyst will fall if a storage function falls, according to air-fuel ratio fluctuation of the upstream, it also comes to change the air-fuel ratio in the downstream. For this reason, the locus length LVOS of the downstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOS is O<sub>2</sub>. It becomes large with lowering of a storage function, and is drawing 7 (B). It is O<sub>2</sub> so that it may be shown. A storage function will become equal to the locus length LVOM of the air-fuel ratio sensor output VOM of the upstream in the condition of having been lost thoroughly, namely, the ratio of the locus length LVOS of the downstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOS under feed back control of air-fuel ratio, and the locus length LVOM of the upstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOM -- if LR (LR=LVOS/LVOM) is taken -- O<sub>2</sub> a value with LR far smaller than 1 when a storage function is high enough -- becoming -- O<sub>2</sub> a storage function falls -- it is alike and takes, and it increases and comes to approach 1. this operation gestalt -- the above -- being based -- the ratio of the locus length of upstream air-fuel ratio sensor 29a, 29b output, and downstream air-fuel ratio sensor 31 output -- LR -- O<sub>2</sub> of SCs 5a and 5b It is used as a parameter showing a storage depression. Like this operation gestalt, in addition, two exhaust air clarification catalysts 5a and 5b and two upstream air-fuel ratio sensors 29a, When it is an engine with 29b, may compute the locus length LVOM, using the average of the output of two upstream air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b as an upstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOM, and Or output locus length may be computed to every air-fuel ratio sensor 29a and 29b, and what averaged both locus length may be used as upstream air-fuel ratio sensor output locus length LVOM.

Drawing 8 is the amount maximum OSCMAX of storage oxygen in consideration of degradation of SCs 5a and 5b of this operation gestalt. It is a flow chart explaining math operation. This actuation is performed as a routine performed by ECU30 for every fixed time amount.

[0081] If actuation starts in drawing 8, at step 801, it will be judged whether degradation parameter instruction execution conditions are satisfied. With this operation gestalt, the conditions of step 801 are supposed that the engine is operated by mode \*\* (theoretical-air-fuel-ratio homogeneity gaseous mixture combustion (one intake-stroke injection)), and feed back control of air-fuel ratio based on the air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b is carried out. As drawing 7 explained, it is the locus length ratio LR O<sub>2</sub> of a catalyst In order to use it as a parameter showing a storage function, it is because it is necessary to compute the locus length ratio LR in the condition that feedback control of the engine air-fuel ratio is carried out to theoretical air fuel ratio.

[0082] When conditions are satisfied at step 801, the output voltage VOM of the upstream air-fuel ratio sensors 29a and 29b and the output voltage VOS of the downstream air-fuel ratio sensor 31 are read at step 803. In addition, with this operation gestalt, the average of the output voltage of Sensors 29a and 29b is used as a VOM. Subsequently, at step 805, the locus length LVOM of the upstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOM and the locus length LVOS of the downstream air-fuel ratio sensor output VOS are computed as LVOM=LVOM+|VOM-VOMi-1 |LVOS=LVOS+|VOS-VOSi-1 |. It is VOMi-1 and VOSi-1 here. It is the value of VOM and VOS at the time of this actuation activation last time, and is updated at step 807 for every LVOM and LVOS calculation, respectively. That is, with this operation gestalt, as shown in drawing 9, the approximation calculation using the integrated value of |VOM-VOMi-1 | and |VOS-VOSi-1 | as LVOM and LVOS is performed, respectively.

[0083] Step 809 and step 811 are judgment actuation of the calculation period of locus length. With this operation gestalt, addition of Above LVOM and LVOS is performed until the value of the counter CT which increases every [ 1 ] for every actuation activation reaches the predetermined value T. In addition, the predetermined value T is set up so that the sum total of the above-mentioned addition period may become about dozens of seconds. When Period T passes at step 811, the locus length ratio LR is computed as LR=LVOS/LVOM at step 813 from the value of LVOM and LVOS which were integrated within the period. Moreover, it is based on the relation beforehand set up at step 815 from the value of the above-mentioned locus length ratio LR (O<sub>2</sub> storage functional parameter), and is OSCMAX. A correction factor RD is called for. And the amount maximum OSCMAX of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b current at step 819 It is computed as OSCMAX =OSCMAX0xRD. Here, OSCMAX0 is the amount maximum of storage oxygen in the new condition that SCs 5a and 5b have not deteriorated at all.

[0084] Drawing 10 is a graph which shows the relation of the locus length ratio LR and correction factor RD which are used for asking for a correction factor RD at the drawing 8 step 817. As shown in drawing 10, in

the condition ( $LR << 1.0$ ) that the catalyst has not deteriorated at all, the value of a correction factor RD is set as 1.0, and it is set up so that it may become small, as degradation of a catalyst progresses (as the value of LR approaches 1).

[0085] It is the amount maximum OSCMAX of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b by drawing 10. Since the presumed precision of the amount OSC of storage oxygen of SCs 5a and 5b in each above-mentioned operation gestalt improves by setting up according to degradation extent of a catalyst, it becomes possible to perform the still more exact amount reduction actuation of storage oxygen in each above-mentioned operation gestalt.

[0086]

[Effect of the Invention] According to invention given in each claim, it is O<sub>2</sub>. The common effectiveness it is ineffective to it being possible to prevent the delay of change to theoretical air fuel ratio or a rich air-fuel ratio is done so from the Lean air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air air-fuel ratio of the catalyst downstream in the case of having arranged to the flueway the exhaust air clarification catalyst which has a storage function.

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[Translation done.]

## \* NOTICES \*

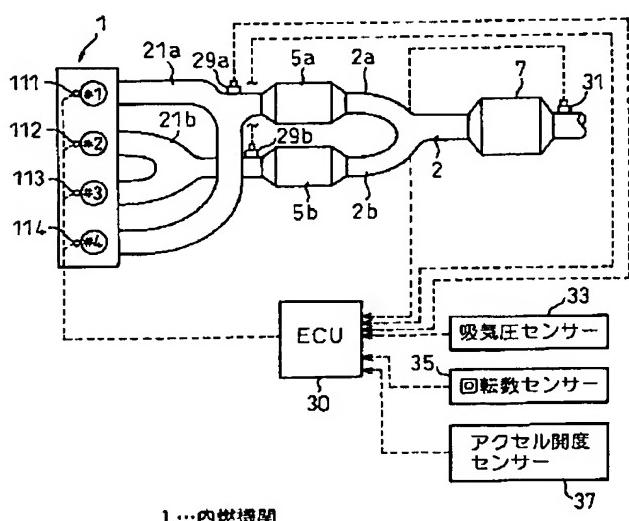
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2. \*\*\* shows the word which can not be translated.
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DRAWINGS

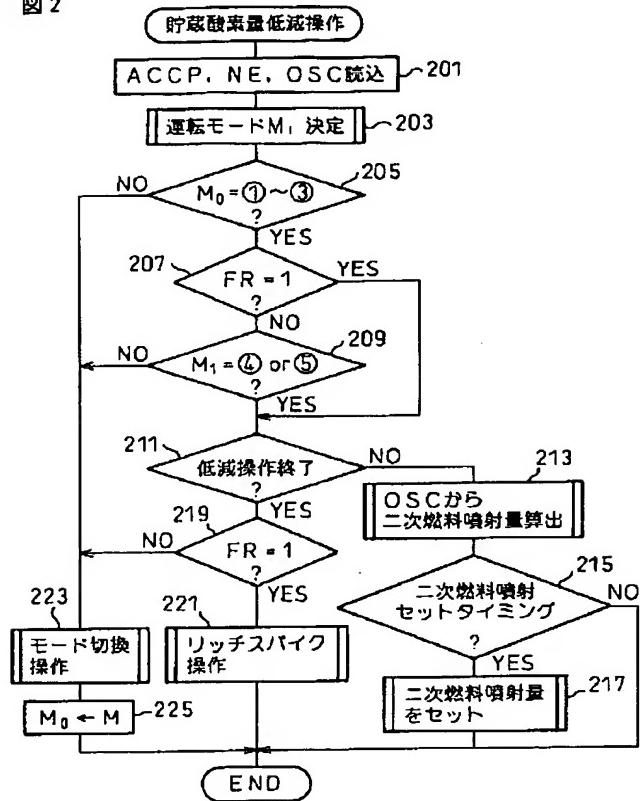
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[Drawing 1]  
図1

1 … 内燃機関  
2 … 排気通路  
5 a., 5 b … スタートキャタリスト  
7 … N.O. 吸収還元触媒  
29 a., 29 b., 31 … 空燃比センサー  
30 … 電子制御ユニット (ECU)

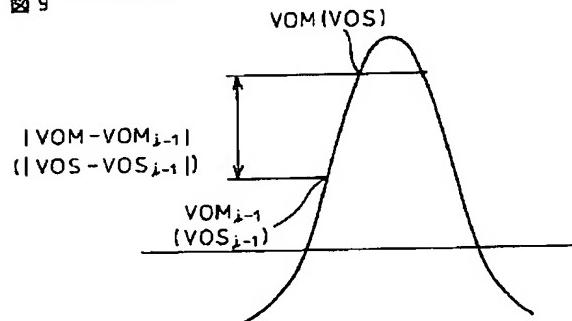
[Drawing 2]

図 2



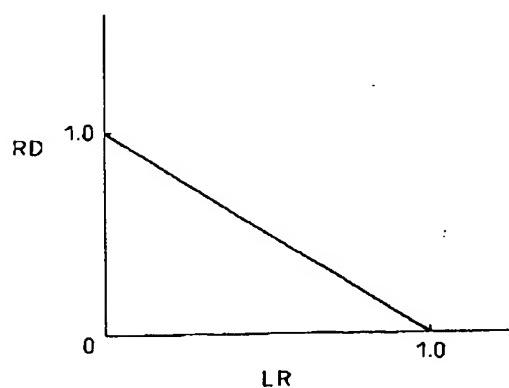
[Drawing 9]

図 9

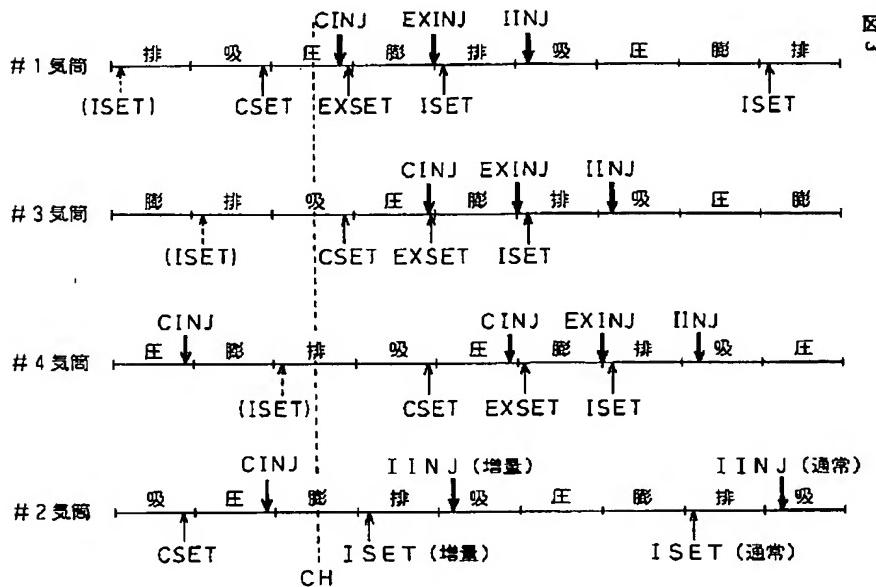


[Drawing 10]

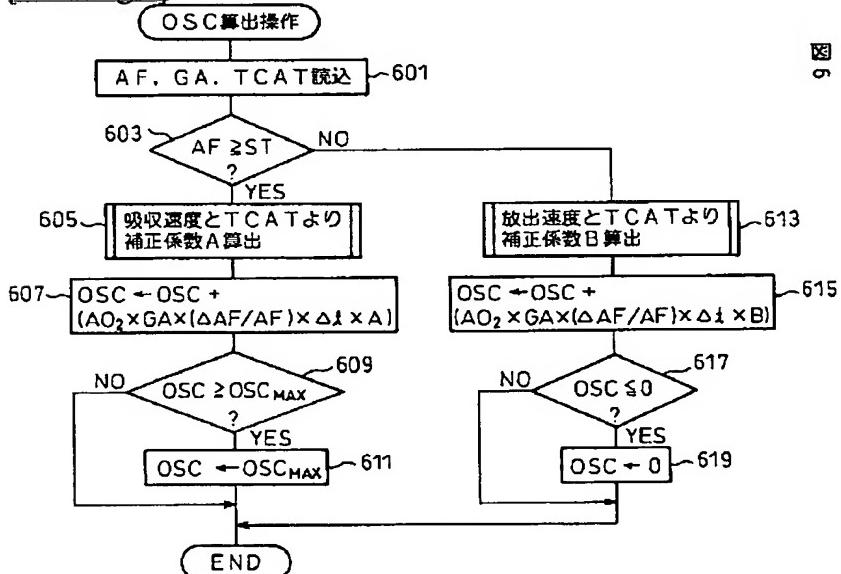
図 10



[Drawing 3]

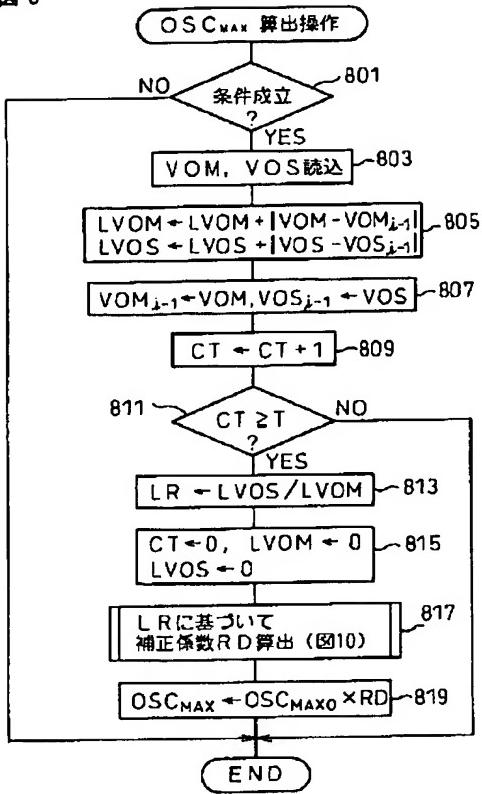


[Drawing 6]



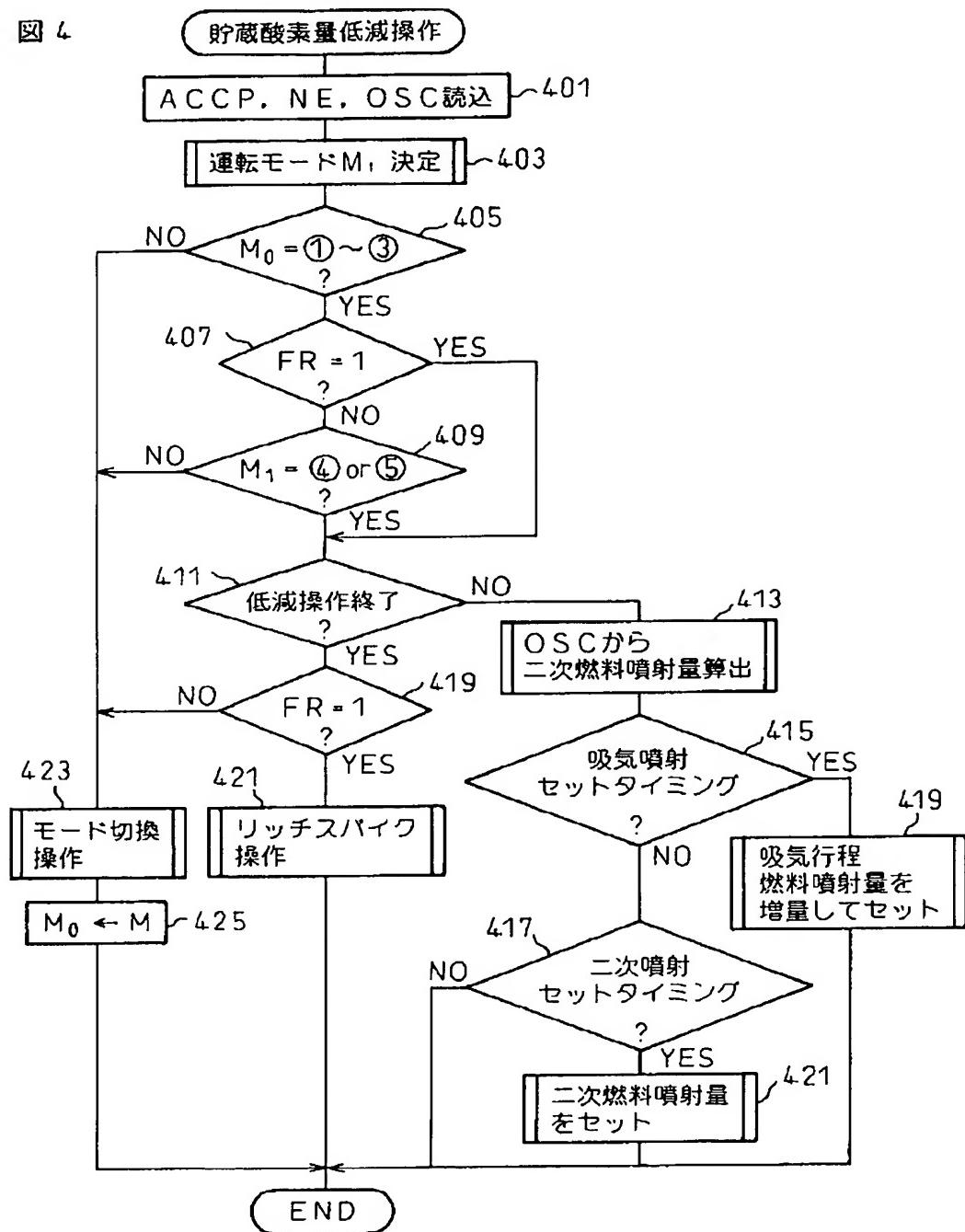
[Drawing 8]

図 8



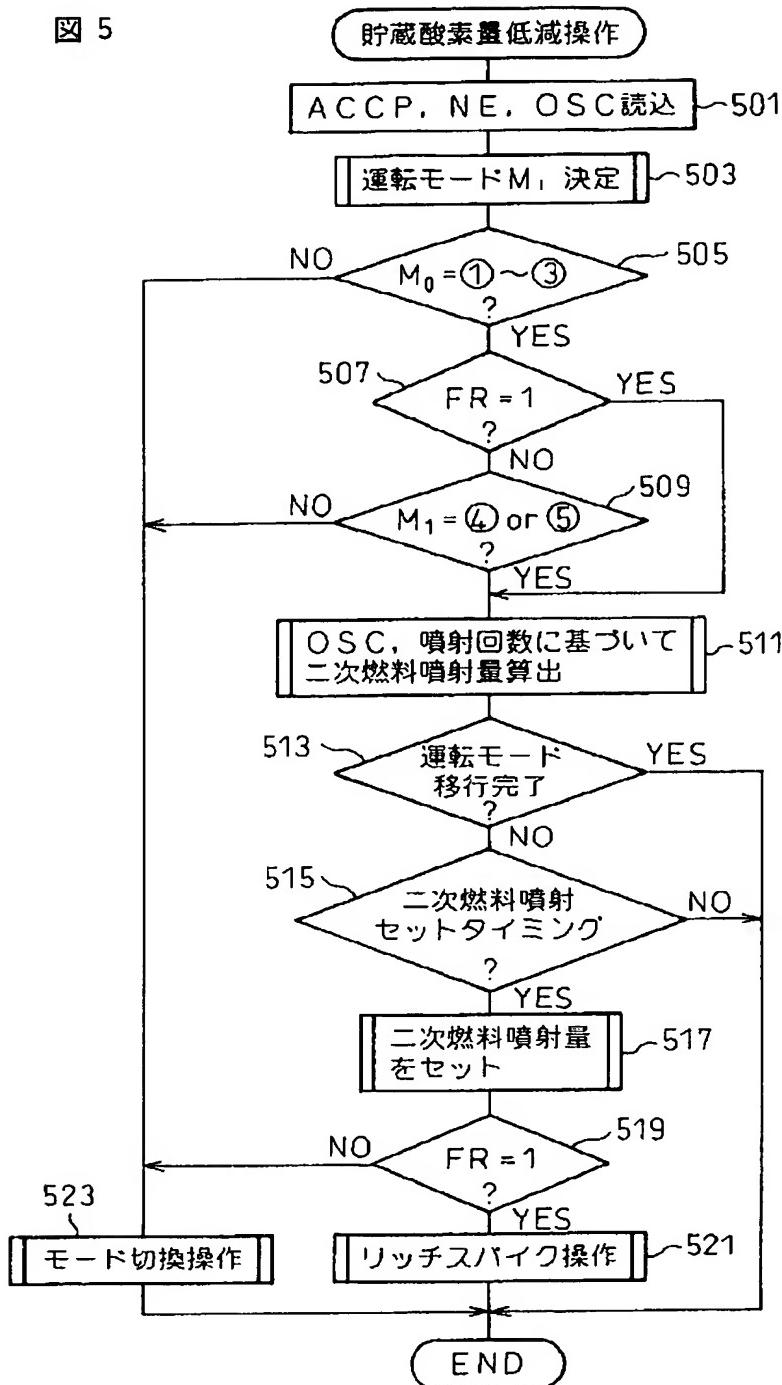
[Drawing 4]

図 4



[Drawing 5]

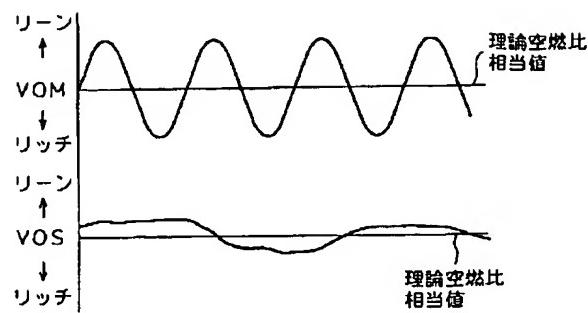
図 5



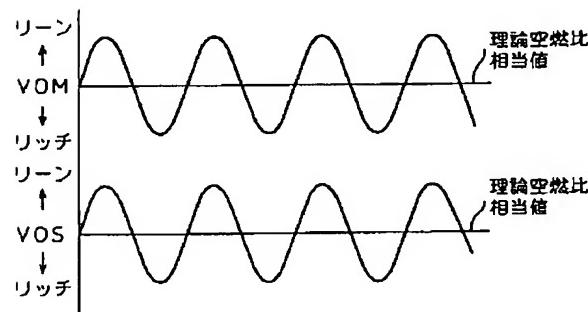
[Drawing 7]

図 7

(A)



(B)



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[Translation done.]

# EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE

## Patent Abstracts of Japan

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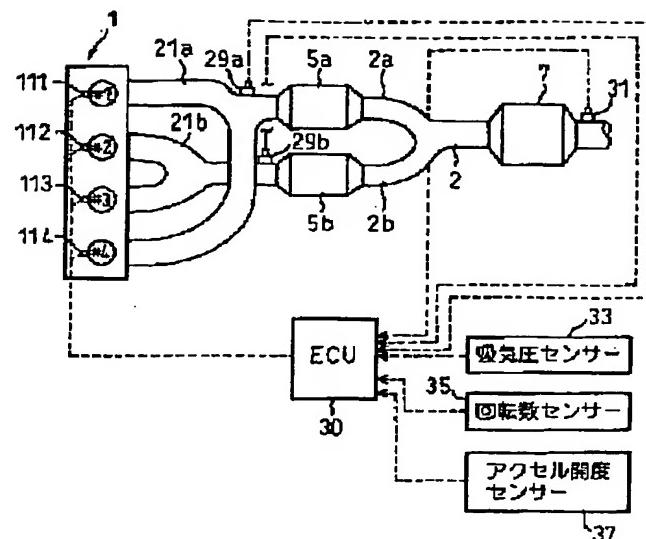
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INVENTOR : TANAHASHI TOSHIO;

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TITLE : EXHAUST EMISSION CONTROL  
DEVICE FOR LEAN BURN INTERNAL  
COMBUSTION ENGINE



ABSTRACT : PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To prevent variation in air-fuel ratio from delaying due to an O<sub>2</sub> storage function of catalyst.

SOLUTION: Start catalysts(SC) 5a, 5b each having an O<sub>2</sub> storage function are located in exhaust passages 2a, 2b of an engine 1, and an NOx occlusion and reduction catalyst 7 is located on a downstream side merging exhaust passage 2. During lean mixture operation of an engine, the catalyst 7 is allowed to absorb NOX from exhaust gas, and the engine is operated with a rich mixture when the NOX is emitted so as to increase the air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas flowing into the start catalysts 5a, 5b and the catalyst 7. An ECU 30 carries out secondary fuel injection which does not contribute combustion, by means of cylinder fuel injection values 111 to 114 during expansion or exhaust stroke of each engine cylinder so as to increase the air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas flowing into the start catalysts 5a, 5b in order to emit oxygen occluded in the start catalysts 5a, 5b when the ECU 30 changes over the operation from the rich mixture operation into the lean mixture operation. Thereby, it is possible to prevent variation in air-fuel ratio from a lean mixture into a rich mixture from delaying upon change-over of air-fuel ratio.

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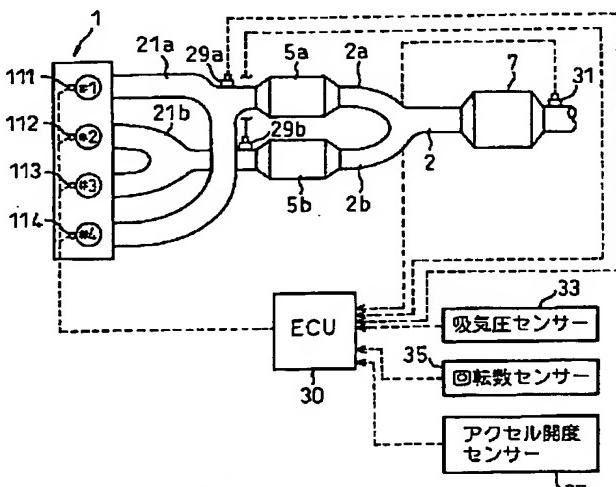
(54)【発明の名称】 希薄燃焼内燃機関の排気浄化装置

(57)【要約】

【課題】 触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能による空燃比変化の遅れを防止する。

【解決手段】 機関1の排気通路2a、2bにO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有するスタートキャタリスト(SC)5a、5bを配置し、下流側の合流排気通路2上にNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7を配置する。機関のリーン空燃比運転中に触媒7に排気中のNO<sub>x</sub>を吸収させ、NO<sub>x</sub>を放出すべきときに機関をリッチ空燃比で運転してSC5a、5b及び触媒7に流入する排気空燃比をリッチにする。ECU30は、リーン空燃比運転からリッチ空燃比運転に機関運転空燃比を切り換えるときに各気筒の膨張行程または排気行程に筒内燃料噴射弁111から114により燃焼に寄与しない二次燃料噴射を行い、SC5a、5bに流入する排気の空燃比をリッチにしてSC5a、5bに貯蔵された酸素を放出させる。これにより、空燃比切り換え時にリーンからリッチへの空燃比変化の遅れが防止される。

図1



1…内燃機関  
2…排気通路  
5 a, 5 b…スタートキャタリスト  
7…NO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒  
29 a, 29 b, 31…空燃比センサー  
30…電子制御ユニット(ECU)

## 【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 必要に応じてリーン空燃比の運転と理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比の運転とに運転空燃比の切り換えるを行なう内燃機関の排気浄化装置であって、

機関排気通路に配置されたO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒と、

前記機関をリーン空燃比運転から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比運転に切り換える際に、燃焼に寄与しない燃料を機関に供給し前記排気浄化触媒に流入する排気空燃比を機関運転空燃比よりリッチにすることにより前記排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減するストレージ低減手段と、

を備えた内燃機関の排気浄化装置。

【請求項2】 更に、前記排気浄化触媒下流側の排気通路に、流入する排気の空燃比がリーン空燃比のときに排気中のNO<sub>x</sub>を吸収し流入する排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出するNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒を備え、前記ストレージ低減手段は更に、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときに排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減する請求項1に記載の排気浄化装置。

【請求項3】 前記機関のリーン空燃比運転中に前記NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときに短時間機関の運転空燃比をリッチ空燃比に切り換えるリッチスパイク操作を行なう手段を備え、リッチスパイク操作時に前記ストレージ低減手段により前記排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減する請求項2に記載の内燃機関の排気浄化装置。

【請求項4】 必要に応じてリーン空燃比運転を行なう内燃機関の排気浄化装置であって、

機関排気通路に配置されたO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒と、

前記排気浄化触媒下流側の排気通路に配置された、流入する排気の空燃比がリーン空燃比のときに排気中のNO<sub>x</sub>を吸収し流入する排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出するNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒と、

機関のリーン空燃比運転中に前記NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときに短時間機関の運転空燃比をリッチ空燃比に切り換えるリッチスパイク操作を行なう手段と、

前記リッチスパイク操作開始直後の所定期間前記排気浄化触媒に流入する排気空燃比をリッチスパイク操作中の空燃比より更にリッチにすることにより、排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減するストレージ低減手段と、を備えた内燃機関の排気浄化装置。

【請求項5】 前記ストレージ低減手段は、前記機関の運転状態に基づいて前記排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を推定するストレージ推定手段を備え、推定した貯蔵酸素量に応じて前記酸素量低減操作を行なう請求項1から4のいずれか1項に記載の内燃機関の排気浄化装置。

【請求項6】 前記ストレージ推定手段は、前記機関の運転状態に加えて前記排気浄化触媒の劣化状態に基づいて排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を推定する請求項5に記載の内燃機関の排気浄化装置。

## 【発明の詳細な説明】

## 【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】 本発明は内燃機関の排気浄化装置に関し、詳細にはO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒を備えた内燃機関の排気浄化装置に関する。

## 10 【0002】

【従来の技術】 理論空燃比付近で運転される機関の排気通路にO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する三元触媒等の排気浄化三元触媒を配置して排気中のHC、CO、NO<sub>x</sub>の三成分を浄化する技術が知られている。三元触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能とは、流入する排気の空燃比がリーンのときに排気中の酸素成分を触媒内に吸収、保持し、流入する排気の空燃比がリッチのときに吸収した酸素を放出する機能をいう。周知のように、三元触媒は流入する排気空燃比が理論空燃比付近の狭い範囲にあるときに排気中のHC、CO、NO<sub>x</sub>の三成分を同時に浄化することができるが、排気空燃比が理論空燃比からずれると上記三成分を同時に浄化することができなくなる性質を有する。一方、三元触媒にO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を付加すると、三元触媒に流入する排気が理論空燃比よりリーンになったときには触媒に排気中の余剰酸素が吸収され、リッチになったときには触媒から酸素が放出されるようになり、触媒に流入する排気の空燃比が理論空燃比から外れた場合でも三元触媒の雰囲気を理論空燃比近傍に維持することが可能となる。このため、理論空燃比付近の空燃比で運転される機関の排気をO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する三元触媒を用いて浄化することにより、HC、CO、NO<sub>x</sub>の三成分を良好に浄化することが可能となる。

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【0003】 一方、流入する排気空燃比がリーンのときに排気中のNO<sub>x</sub>（窒素酸化物）を吸収し、流入する排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出するNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒が知られている。NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒を使用した排気浄化装置の例としては、例えば特許登録第2600492号に記載されたものがある。上記特

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許の排気浄化装置は、リーン空燃比運転を行う機関の排気通路にNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒を配置し、機関のリーン空燃比運転中にNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒に排気中のNO<sub>x</sub>を吸収させ、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒のNO<sub>x</sub>吸収量が増大したときに、機関を短時間理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比で運転するリッチスパイク操作を行うことにより、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出せるとともに、放出されたNO<sub>x</sub>を還元浄化している。すなわち、排気の空燃比が理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比になると、リーン空燃比の排気に較べて排気中の酸素濃度が急激に低下するとともに、排気中の未燃HC、CO成分の

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量が急激に増大する。このため、リッチスパイク操作により機関運転空燃比が理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に切り換えられると、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気の空燃比はリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に変化し、排気中の酸素濃度の低下により $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒から $\text{NO}_x$  が放出される。また、上記のように理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比の排気中には比較的多量の未燃HC、CO成分が含まれるため、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒から放出された $\text{NO}_x$  は排気中の未燃HC、CO成分と反応し還元される。

## 【0004】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】上記特許登録第2600492号に記載の排気浄化装置によれば、機関リーン空燃比運転中に発生する $\text{NO}_x$  を効率よく浄化することが可能となる。しかし、上記特許登録第2600492号の装置に、スタートキャタリストとして $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ機能を有する三元触媒を附加する場合には問題が生じる場合がある。

【0005】スタートキャタリストは、機関始動時に機関から多量に放出されるHC、CO成分を除去することを主な目的としており、機関始動後短時間で昇温し触媒活性化温度に到達するように排気通路のできるだけ機関に近い位置に配置する必要がある。このため、上記特許登録第2600492号の排気浄化装置に附加する場合には、スタートキャタリストは $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒の上流側の排気通路に配置される。

【0006】ところが、 $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ機能を有する触媒をスタートキャタリストとして $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒の上流側排気通路に配置した場合には、リーン空燃比運転中に $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒からの $\text{NO}_x$  の放出、還元浄化のためのリッチスパイク操作を行うとリッチスパイク操作初期に $\text{NO}_x$  が $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒から浄化されないまま放出される問題が生じることが判明している。

【0007】この問題は、リッチスパイク操作時に $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気の空燃比のリーンからリッチへの変化がスタートキャタリストの $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ作用のために遅れを生じるためと考えられる。すなわち、リッチスパイク操作が行われると機関からの排気の空燃比はリーンからリッチに急激に変化するが、スタートキャタリストが $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ機能を有するため、このリッチ空燃比の排気がスタートキャタリストに流入するとスタートキャタリストからは吸収した酸素が放出されてしまい、スタートキャタリストから流出する排気の空燃比は理論空燃比近傍に維持される。このため、リッチスパイク操作を開始しても $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気の空燃比はスタートキャタリストが吸収した酸素の全量を放し終わるまでは充分なリッチ空燃比にならず、理論空燃比に近いリーン空燃比に維持される場合が生じる。

【0008】 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気の空燃

比がリーン空燃比から理論空燃比に近いリーン空燃比に変化すると、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒の表面付近の酸素濃度は急激に低下する。後述するように、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒はアルカリ土類（例えばBa）等と結合した硝酸イオンの形で $\text{NO}_x$  を触媒内部に保持しているが、触媒表面付近の酸素濃度が低下すると、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒の表面付近に保持された $\text{NO}_x$  が一斉に触媒表面から放出されるようになる。この場合、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気が理論空燃比に近いリーン空燃比に維持されていると、排気中には放出された $\text{NO}_x$  の全量を還元するのに充分な量のHC、COが含まれていないため、放出された $\text{NO}_x$  の一部は還元されずにそのまま $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒下流側に流出するようになってしまう。このため、スタートキャタリストの $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ機能により、リッチスパイク操作時に $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気空燃比が充分にリッチな空燃比に到達するのが遅れると $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒から未浄化の $\text{NO}_x$  が流出するようになると考えられる。

【0009】上述したように、スタートキャタリストに吸収された酸素の全量が放出されるとスタートキャタリスト下流側の排気の空燃比もスタートキャタリスト上流側と同じリッチ空燃比となるため、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒には充分にリッチな空燃比の排気が供給されるようになる。従って、リッチスパイク操作を開始してからある程度の時間が経過すると $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒から放出された $\text{NO}_x$  は $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒上でその全量が浄化されるようになり、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒からの未浄化の $\text{NO}_x$  の流出は停止する。しかし、上述のようにリッチスパイク操作毎に $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒から未浄化の $\text{NO}_x$  が流出したのでは全体としての $\text{NO}_x$  浄化率が低下する問題が生じる。

【0010】また、機関の運転状態に応じて機関の運転空燃比をリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に切り換えるような機関では、リッチスパイク操作を行わなくとも機関からの排気の空燃比はリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に切り換えられる場合があるが、この場合も排気浄化触媒の $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ機能のために、運転空燃比切り替えの際に $\text{NO}_x$  吸藏還元触媒に流入する排気空燃比が一時的に理論空燃比近傍のリーン空燃比に維持される期間が生じると、上記と同様未浄化の $\text{NO}_x$  が放出され、排気性状が悪化する問題が生じる。

【0011】本発明は上記問題に鑑み、 $\text{O}_2$  ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒を排気通路に配置した場合の排気浄化触媒下流側の排気空燃比の、リーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比への変化の遅れを防止することを目的としている。

## 【0012】

【課題を解決するための手段】請求項1に記載の発明によれば、必要に応じてリーン空燃比の運転と理論空燃比

またはリッチ空燃比の運転とリーン空燃比の切り換えを行なう内燃機関の排気浄化装置であって、機関排気通路に配置されたO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒と、前記機関をリーン空燃比運転から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比運転に切り換える際に、燃焼に寄与しない燃料を機関に供給し前記排気浄化触媒に流入する排気空燃比を機関運転空燃比よりリッチにすることにより前記排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減するストレージ低減手段と、を備えた内燃機関の排気浄化装置が提供される。

【0013】すなわち、請求項1の発明では機関の運転空燃比がリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に切り換えられる際に、機関に燃焼に寄与しない燃料が供給される。この燃料は燃焼しないまま未燃HC成分となり、排気とともに機関から排出される。このため、排気浄化触媒には機関運転空燃比よりリッチな空燃比でかつ未燃HCを多量に含む排気が流入する。この場合、排気浄化触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能により、排気浄化触媒からは酸素が放出される。しかし、O<sub>2</sub>ストレージによる酸素の放出速度には限界があるため、流入する排氣中に多量の未燃HC成分が含まれると放出された酸素では排氣中の未燃HC成分の全量を酸化することができなくなり、排気浄化触媒下流側の排氣の空燃比は理論空燃比よりリッチ側の空燃比となる。すなわち、排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素が放出され直ちに消費されるので、排気浄化触媒下流側の排氣空燃比も直ちにリッチ空燃比に変化するようになる。このため、排気浄化触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能による空燃比変化の遅れが防止される。なお、燃焼に寄与しない燃料の供給は排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量が充分に低減されると（すなわち、排気浄化触媒からの酸素の放出が実用上問題にならない程度まで低下すると）停止される。また、ストレージ低減手段としては、気筒内に直接燃料を噴射する筒内燃料噴射弁を有する機関にあっては、各気筒の膨張行程または排気行程において気筒内に燃料を噴射するものであってもよいし、各気筒排気ポートに燃料噴射を行う排気ポート燃料噴射弁を有する機関にあっては排気ポートに燃料を噴射するものであっても良い。また、O<sub>2</sub>ストレージ低減手段による燃焼に寄与しない燃料の供給は、機関運転空燃比の切り換え直前のリーン空燃比運転中に行っても良いし、切り換え直後の理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比の運転中に行っても良い。

【0014】請求項2に記載の発明によれば、更に、前記排気浄化触媒下流側の排気通路に、流入する排氣の空燃比がリーン空燃比のときに排氣中のNO<sub>x</sub>を吸収し流入する排氣の空燃比がリッチ空燃比になったときに吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出するNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒を備え、前記ストレージ低減手段は更に、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときに排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減する請求項1に記載の排気浄化裝

置が提供される。

【0015】請求項3に記載の発明によれば、前記機関のリーン空燃比運転中に前記NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときに短時間機関の運転空燃比をリッチ空燃比に切り換えるリッチスパイク操作を行なう手段を備え、リッチスパイク操作時に前記ストレージ低減手段により前記排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減する請求項2に記載の内燃機関の排気浄化装置が提供される。

【0016】すなわち、請求項2と請求項3との発明ではO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒の下流側にNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒が配置されており、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときにストレージ低減手段による排気浄化のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能の低減が行われる。このため、運転状態の変化により機関運転空燃比がリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に切り換えられる場合のみならず、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒からNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させる際にNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒に流入する排氣の空燃比をリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に変化させる場合にもNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒に流入する排氣の空燃比は直ちにリーン空燃比から充分なリッチ空燃比に変化するようになりNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub>が流出することが防止される。

【0017】請求項4に記載の発明によれば、必要に応じてリーン空燃比運転を行なう内燃機関の排気浄化装置であって、機関排気通路に配置されたO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒と、前記排気浄化触媒下流側の排気通路に配置された、流入する排氣の空燃比がリーン空燃比のときに排氣中のNO<sub>x</sub>を吸収し流入する排氣の空燃比がリッチ空燃比になったときに吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出するNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒と、機関のリーン空燃比運転中に前記NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるべきときに短時間機関の運転空燃比をリッチ空燃比に切り換えるリッチスパイク操作を行なう手段と、前記リッチスパイク操作開始直後の所定期間前記排気浄化触媒に流入する排氣空燃比をリッチスパイク操作中の空燃比より更にリッチにすることにより、排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を低減するストレージ低減手段と、を備えた内燃機関の排気浄化装置が提供される。

【0018】すなわち、請求項4の発明では、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒からのNO<sub>x</sub>の放出と還元浄化のためにリッチスパイク操作を行うときに、リッチスパイク開始直後の所定期間排気浄化触媒に流入する排氣の空燃比が、その後のリッチスパイク操作中の排氣空燃比より更にリッチに保持される。これにより、排気浄化触媒からO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能により酸素が放出されている間も排氣中には放出された酸素の全量を消費するのに充分な量の未燃HC、CO成分が含まれるようになり、排気浄化触媒から酸素が放出されている間も排気浄化触媒下流側の排氣

空燃比は充分なリッチ空燃比となる。従って、排気浄化触媒下流側のNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒にはリッチスパイク操作開始時から充分にリッチな空燃比の排気が供給されるようになり、NO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒からの未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub>の流出が防止される。なお、リッチスパイク開始直後に排気浄化触媒に流入する排気の空燃比は、排気浄化触媒から放出された酸素の全量を消費するのに充分な量と下流側のNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒から放出されるNO<sub>x</sub>の全量を浄化するのに充分な量とを合計した量の未燃HC、CO成分を含むように設定される。また、ストレージ低減手段としては、請求項1から3のように、気筒の膨張または排気行程中に気筒内に燃料噴射を行うものや排気ポートに燃料噴射を行うもののように機関に燃焼に寄与しない燃料を供給するものの他、リッチスパイク開始後所定の期間、その後のリッチスパイク操作中より機関の運転空燃比を更にリッチにするものであっても良い。また、上記所定期間は、排気浄化触媒から吸収した酸素の全量が放出されるのに充分な時間に設定される。

【0019】請求項5に記載の発明によれば、前記ストレージ低減手段は、前記機関の運転状態に基づいて前記排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を推定するストレージ推定手段を備え、推定した貯蔵酸素量に応じて前記酸素量低減操作を行なう請求項1から4のいずれか1項に記載の内燃機関の排気浄化装置が提供される。すなわち、請求項5の発明ではストレージ低減手段は排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を推定するとともに、推定した酸素量に応じて酸素量低減操作を行う。例えばストレージ低減手段は、貯蔵酸素量が多いほど排気浄化触媒に流入する排気の空燃比を低下させ（すなわちリッチの度合いを深め）、または酸素量低減操作を継続する時間を長くする。これにより、酸素量低減操作が正確に行なわれるようになり、排気浄化触媒下流側の排気空燃比の変化の遅れが確実に防止されるようになる。なお、ストレージ低減手段による排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量推定は、例えば触媒温度、排気流量、機関の空燃比変化の履歴（リーン空燃比運転とリッチ空燃比運転の継続時間）等の機関運転状態に基づいて行なわれる。

【0020】請求項6に記載の発明によれば、前記ストレージ推定手段は、前記機関の運転状態に加えて前記排気浄化触媒の劣化状態に基づいて排気浄化触媒に貯蔵された酸素量を推定する請求項5に記載の内燃機関の排気浄化装置が提供される。請求項6の発明では、ストレージ低減手段は、機関運転状態に加えて排気浄化触媒の劣化状態に基づいて貯蔵酸素量を推定する。O<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能は排気浄化触媒の劣化とともに低下し、排気浄化触媒の貯蔵可能な酸素量（飽和酸素量）は排気浄化触媒の劣化とともに少なくなる。すなわち、排気浄化触媒には飽和酸素量以上の量の酸素は貯蔵されない。従って、排気浄化触媒の劣化状態を考慮することにより、排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量をより正確に推定することが可能と

なり、酸素量低減操作を更に正確に行なうことが可能となる。

#### 【0021】

【発明の実施の形態】以下、添付図面を参照して本発明の実施形態について説明する。図1は、本発明を自動車用内燃機関に適用した場合の実施形態の概略構成を示す図である。図1において、1は自動車用内燃機関を示す。本実施形態では、機関1は#1から#4の4つの気筒を備えた4気筒ガソリン機関とされ、#1から#4気筒には直接気筒内に燃料を噴射する燃料噴射弁111から114が設けられている。後述するように、本実施形態の内燃機関1は、理論空燃比より高い（リーンな）空燃比で運転可能なリーンバーンエンジンとされている。

【0022】また、本実施形態では#1から#4の気筒は互いに点火時期が連続しない2つの気筒からなる2つの気筒群にグループ分けされている。（例えば、図1の実施形態では、気筒点火順序は1-3-4-2であり、#1、#4の気筒と#2、#3の気筒とがそれぞれ気筒群を構成している。）また、各気筒の排気ポートは気筒群毎に排気マニホールドに接続され、気筒群毎の排気通路に接続されている。図1において、21aは#1、#4気筒からなる気筒群の排気ポートを個別排気通路2aに接続する排気マニホールド、21bは#2、#3気筒からなる気筒群の排気ポートを個別排気通路2bに接続する排気マニホールドである。本実施形態では、個別排気通路2a、2b上には、三元触媒からなるスタートキャタリスト（以下「SC」と呼ぶ）5aと5bがそれぞれ配置されている。また、個別排気通路2a、2bはSC下流側で共通の排気通路2に合流している。

【0023】共通排気通路2上には、後述するNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7が配置されている。図1に29a、29bで示すのは、個別排気通路2a、2bのスタートキャタリスト5a、5b上流側に配置された空燃比センサ、31で示すのは、排気通路2のNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7出口に配置された空燃比センサである。空燃比センサ29a、29b及び31は、広い空燃比範囲で排気空燃比に対応する電圧信号を出力する、いわゆるリニア空燃比センサとされている。更に、図1に30で示すのは機関1の電子制御ユニット（ECU）である。ECU30は、本実施形態ではRAM、ROM、CPUを備えた公知の構成のマイクロコンピュータとされ、機関1の点火時期制御や燃料噴射制御等の基本制御を行なっている。また、本実施形態では、ECU30は上記の基本制御を行う他に、後述するように機関運転状態に応じて筒内噴射弁111から114の燃料噴射モードを変更し機関の運転空燃比を変更する制御を行なうとともに、更にNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるために機関のリーン空燃比運転中に短時間運転空燃比をリッチ空燃比に切り換えるリッチスパイク操作を行なっている。さらにECU30は機関運転空燃比をリーンからリ

ッチに変化させる際やリッチスバイク操作の際にSC5 a、5 bに貯蔵された酸素量を低減させる貯蔵酸素量低減操作を行う。

【0024】ECU30の入力ポートには、空燃比センサ29a、29bからスタートキャタリスト5a、5b入口における排気空燃比を表す信号と、空燃比センサ31からNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7出口における排気空燃比を表す信号が、また、図示しない機関吸気マニホールドに設けられた吸気圧センサ33から機関の吸気圧力に対応する信号がそれぞれ入力されている他、機関クランク軸(図示せず)近傍に配置された回転数センサ35から機関回転数に対応する信号が入力されている。更に、本実施形態では、ECU30の入力ポートには機関1のアクセルペダル(図示せず)近傍に配置したアクセル開度センサ37から運転者のアクセルペダル踏込み量(アクセル開度)を表す信号が入力されている。また、ECU30の出力ポートは、各気筒への燃料噴射量及び燃料噴射時期を制御するために、図示しない燃料噴射回路を介して各気筒の燃料噴射弁111から114に接続されている。

【0025】本実施形態では、ECU30は機関1を機関の運転状態に応じて以下の5つの燃焼モードで運転する。

- ① リーン空燃比成層燃焼(圧縮行程1回噴射)
- ② リーン空燃比均質混合気／成層燃焼(吸気行程／圧縮行程2回噴射)
- ③ リーン空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程1回噴射)
- ④ 理論空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程1回噴射)
- ⑤ リッチ空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程1回噴射)

すなわち、機関1の軽負荷運転領域では、上記①のリーン空燃比成層燃焼が行なわれる。この状態では、筒内燃料噴射は各気筒の圧縮行程後半に1回のみ行なわれ噴射された燃料は気筒点火プラグ近傍に可燃混合気の層を形成する。また、この運転状態での燃料噴射量は極めて少なく、気筒内の全体としての空燃比は25から30程度になる。

【0026】また、上記①の状態から負荷が増大して低負荷運転領域になると、上記②リーン空燃比均質混合気／成層燃焼が行なわれる。機関負荷が増大するにつれて気筒内に噴射する燃料は増量されるが、上記①の成層燃焼では燃料噴射を圧縮行程後半に行なうため、噴射時間が限られてしまい成層させることのできる燃料量には限界がある。そこで、この負荷領域では圧縮行程後半の燃料噴射だけでは不足する燃料の量を予め吸気行程前半に噴射することにより目標量の燃料を気筒に供給するようにしている。吸気行程前半に気筒内に噴射された燃料は着火時までに極めてリーンな均質混合気を生成する。圧縮行程後半ではこの極めてリーンな均質混合気中に更に燃料が噴射され点火プラグ近傍に着火可能な可燃混合気の層が生成される。着火時にはこの可燃混合気層が燃焼

を開始し周囲の希薄な混合気層に火炎が伝播するため安定した燃焼が行なわれるようになる。この状態では吸気行程と圧縮行程での噴射により供給される燃料量は①より増量されるが、全体としての空燃比はやや低いリーン(例えば空燃比で20から30程度)になる。

【0027】更に機関負荷が増大すると、機関1では上記③のリーン空燃比均質混合気燃焼が行なわれる。この状態では燃料噴射は吸気行程前半に1回のみ実行され、燃料噴射量は上記②より更に増量される。この状態で気筒内に生成される均質混合気は理論空燃比に比較的近いリーン空燃比(例えば空燃比で15から25程度)となる。

【0028】更に機関負荷が増大して機関高負荷運転領域になると、③の状態から更に燃料が増量され、上記④の理論空燃比均質混合気運転が行なわれる。この状態では、気筒内には理論空燃比の均質な混合気が生成されるようになり、機関出力が増大する。また、更に機関負荷が増大して機関の全負荷運転になると、④の状態から燃料噴射量が更に増量され⑤のリッチ空燃比均質混合気運転が行なわれる。この状態では、気筒内に生成される均質混合気の空燃比はリッチ(例えば空燃比で12から14程度)になる。

【0029】本実施形態では、アクセル開度(運転者のアクセルペダル踏込み量)と機関回転数とに応じて予め実験等に基づいて最適な運転モード(上記①から⑤)が設定されており、ECU30のROMにアクセル開度と機関回転数とを用いたマップとして格納してある。機関1運転中、ECU30はアクセル開度センサ37で検出したアクセル開度と機関回転数とに基づいて、現在上記①から⑤のいずれの運転モードを選択すべきかを決定し、それぞれのモードに応じて燃料噴射量及び燃料噴射時期及び回数を決定する。

【0030】すなわち、上記①から③のモード(リーン空燃比燃焼)が選択された場合には、ECU30は上記①から③のモード毎に予め準備されたマップに基づいて、アクセル開度と機関回転数とから燃料噴射量を決定する。又、上記④と⑤のモード(理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比均質混合気燃焼)が選択された場合には、ECU30は上記④と⑤のモード毎に予め準備されたマップに基づいて、吸気圧センサ33で検出された吸気圧力と機関回転数とに基づいて燃料噴射量を設定する。

【0031】また、モード④(理論空燃比均質混合気燃焼)が選択された場合には、ECU30は更に上記により算出した燃料噴射量を、機関排気空燃比が理論空燃比となるように空燃比センサ29a、29bの出力に基づいてフィードバック補正する。上述のように、本実施形態の機関1では機関負荷が増大するにつれて燃料噴射量が増量され、燃料噴射量に応じて運転モードが変更される。

【0032】次に、本実施形態のスタートキャタリスト

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5 a、5 b 及び  $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒について説明する。スタートキャタリスト (SC) 5 a、5 b は、ハニカム状に成形したコーチェライト等の担体を用いて、この担体表面にアルミナの薄いコーティングを形成し、このアルミナ層に白金 Pt、パラジウム Pd、ロジウム Rh 等の貴金属触媒成分を担持させた三元触媒として構成される。三元触媒は理論空燃比近傍で HC、CO、 $\text{NO}_x$  の 3 成分を高効率で浄化する。三元触媒は、流入する排気の空燃比が理論空燃比より高くなると  $\text{NO}_x$  の還元能力が低下するため、機関 1 がリーン空燃比運転されているときの排気中の  $\text{NO}_x$  を充分に浄化することはできない。

【0033】また、SC 5 a、5 b は機関始動後短時間で触媒の活性温度に到達し、触媒作用を開始することができるよう、排気通路 2 a、2 b の機関 1 に近い部分に配置され、熱容量を低減するために比較的小容量のものとされている。次に、SC 5 a、5 b の O<sub>2</sub> ストレージ機能について説明する。一般に三元触媒等の排気浄化触媒に触媒成分以外にセリウム (Ce) 等の金属成分を担持させると排気浄化触媒が酸素貯蔵機能 (O<sub>2</sub> ストレージ機能) を発揮するようになることが知られている。すなわち、添加剤として触媒に担持されたセリウムは、触媒に流入する排気の空燃比が理論空燃比より高いときに（排気空燃比がリーンのときに）排気中の酸素と結合してセリア（酸化セリウム）を形成し酸素を貯蔵する。また、流入する排気の空燃比が理論空燃比以下のときに（排気空燃比がリッチのときに）は、セリアは酸素を放出して金属セリウムに戻るため酸素が放出される。O<sub>2</sub> ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒では、触媒に流入する排気空燃比がリッチ空燃比からリーン空燃比に変化した場合でも排気中の酸素がセリウムに吸収されるため流入排気中の酸素濃度は低下する。このため、セリウムに酸素が吸収されている間は触媒出口での排気空燃比は理論空燃比近傍になる。また、触媒の担持するセリウムの全量が酸素と結合して（すなわち、触媒が酸素で飽和して）それ以上酸素を吸収することができなくなると、排気浄化出口における排気空燃比は触媒入口における排気空燃比と同じリーン空燃比に変化する。また、同様に、セリウムが充分に酸素を吸収した状態では、触媒に流入する排気の空燃比がリーン空燃比からリッチ空燃比に変化するとセリウムから酸素が放出され、排気中の酸素濃度が増大して触媒出口における空燃比は理論空燃比近傍になる。この場合も、セリウムと結合した酸素の全量が放出された後は、それ以上触媒から酸素が放出されることないので、触媒出口における排気空燃比は触媒入口における空燃比と同様リッチ空燃比となる。すなわち、排気浄化触媒が O<sub>2</sub> ストレージ機能を有していると、触媒下流側の排気空燃比のリーンからリッチまたはリッチからリーンの変化は触媒上流側に較べて遅れを生じることになる。

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【0034】本実施形態の SC 5 a、5 b は O<sub>2</sub> ストレージ機能を付加されているため、機関の運転空燃比がリーンからリッチに変化すると SC 5 a、5 b の下流側における排気空燃比の変化は遅れ、一時的に理論空燃比近傍の空燃比に維持される期間が生じることになる。次に、本実施形態の  $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒 7 について説明する。本実施形態の  $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒 7 は、例えばアルミナを担体とし、この担体上に例えばカリウム K、ナトリウム Na、リチウム Li、セシウム Cs のようなアルカリ金属、バリウム Ba、カルシウム Ca のようなアルカリ土類、ランタン La、セリウム Ce、イットリウム Y のような希土類から選ばれた少なくとも一つの成分と、白金 Pt のような貴金属とを担持したものである。 $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒は流入する排気ガスの空燃比がリーンのときに、排気中の  $\text{NO}_x$  ( $\text{NO}_x$ 、NO) を硝酸イオン NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> の形で吸収し、流入排気ガスがリッチになると吸収した  $\text{NO}_x$  を放出する  $\text{NO}_x$  の吸放出作用を行う。

【0035】この吸放出のメカニズムについて、以下に白金 Pt およびバリウム Ba を使用した場合を例にとって説明するが他の貴金属、アルカリ金属、アルカリ土類、希土類を用いても同様なメカニズムとなる。流入排気中の酸素濃度が増大すると（すなわち排気の空燃比がリーン空燃比になると）、これら酸素は白金 Pt 上に O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> または O<sup>2-</sup> の形で付着し、排気中の  $\text{NO}_x$  は白金 Pt 上の O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> または O<sup>2-</sup> と反応し、これにより NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> が生成される。また、流入排気中の NO<sub>x</sub> 及び上記により生成した NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> は白金 Pt 上で更に酸化されつつ吸収剤中に吸収されて酸化バリウム Ba O と結合しながら硝酸イオン NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> の形で吸収剤内に拡散する。このため、リーン空燃比下では排気中の  $\text{NO}_x$  が  $\text{NO}_x$  吸収剤内に硝酸塩の形で吸収されるようになる。

【0036】また、流入排気中の酸素濃度が大幅に低下すると（すなわち、排気の空燃比が理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比になると）、白金 Pt 上での NO<sub>x</sub> 生成量が減少するため、反応が逆方向に進むようになり、吸収剤内の硝酸イオン NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> は NO<sub>2</sub> の形で吸収剤から放出されるようになる。この場合、排気中に CO 等の還元成分や HC、CO<sub>2</sub> 等の成分が存在すると白金 Pt 上でこれらの成分により NO<sub>x</sub> が還元される。

【0037】本実施形態では、リーン空燃比運転可能な機関 1 が使用されており、機関 1 がリーン空燃比で運転されているときには、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒は流入する排気中の  $\text{NO}_x$  を吸収する。また、機関 1 がリッチ空燃比で運転されると、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒 7 は吸収した  $\text{NO}_x$  を放出、還元浄化する。本実施形態では、リーン空燃比運転中に  $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒 7 に吸収された  $\text{NO}_x$  量が増大すると、短時間機関空燃比をリーン空燃比からリッチ空燃比に切り換えるリッチスパイク運転を行い、 $\text{NO}_x$  吸収還元触媒からの  $\text{NO}_x$  の放出と還元浄化 (NO<sub>x</sub> の吸出)

\* 吸収還元触媒の再生)を行なうようにしている。本実施形態では、ECU 30はNO<sub>x</sub> カウンタの値を増減することによりNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7が吸収保持しているNO<sub>x</sub> 量を推定する。NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7に単位時間当たりに吸収されるNO<sub>x</sub> の量はNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒に単位時間当たりに流入する排気中のNO<sub>x</sub> 量、すなわち機関1で単位時間当たりに生成されるNO<sub>x</sub> 量に比例している。一方、機関で単位時間当たりに発生するNO<sub>x</sub> の量は機関への燃料供給量、空燃比、排気流量等によって定まるため、機関運転条件が定まればNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒に吸収されるNO<sub>x</sub> 量を知ることができる。本実施形態では、予め機関運転条件(アクセル開度、機関回転数、吸入空気量、吸気圧力、空燃比、燃料供給量など)を変えて機関が単位時間当たりに発生するNO<sub>x</sub> 量を実測し、NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7に単位時間当たりに吸収されるNO<sub>x</sub> 量を、例えば機関負荷(燃料噴射量)と機関回転数とを用いた数値マップの形でECU 30のROMに格納している。ECU 30は一定時間毎(上記の単位時間毎)に機関負荷(燃料噴射量)と機関回転数とからこのマップを用いて単位時間当たりにNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒に吸収されたNO<sub>x</sub> 量を算出し、NO<sub>x</sub> カウンタをこのNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収量だけ増大させる。これによりNO<sub>x</sub> カウンタの値は常にNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7に吸収されたNO<sub>x</sub> の量を表すようになる。ECU 30は、機関のリーン空燃比運転中に、上記NO<sub>x</sub> カウンタの値が所定値以上に増大したときに、短時間(例えば0.5から1秒程度)機関を前述の④または⑤のモード(理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比均質混合気燃焼)で運転するリッチスパイク操作を行なう。これにより、NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒から吸収したNO<sub>x</sub> が放出され、還元浄化される。なお、リッチスパイクで排気空燃比をリッチに保持する時間は詳細にはNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒の種類、容量などに基づいて実験等により決定される。また、リッチスパイクを実行してNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒からNO<sub>x</sub> が放出、還元浄化された後はNO<sub>x</sub> カウンタの値は0にリセットされる。このように、NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7のNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収量に応じてリッチスパイクを行なうことにより、NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7は適切に再生され、NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒が吸収したNO<sub>x</sub> で飽和することが防止される。

[0038] ところが、前述のように本実施形態ではNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7上流側の排気通路にO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能を有するSC 5a、5bが設けられている。このため、リッチスパイク時に機関からリッチ空燃比の排気がSC 5a、5bに流入してもSC 5a、5b下流のNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7にはSC 5a、5bでの酸素の放出がある間は理論空燃比近傍のリーン空燃比の排気が流入する場合が生じ、リッチスパイク開始直後にNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7から未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub> が流出する可能性がある。また、同様に機関1の運転条件の変化により機関の運転空燃比がリーン空燃比(前述の①から③の運転モード)

から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比(前述の④または⑤の運転モード)に切り換えられた場合にも切換え直後にNO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7から未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub> の流出が生じる可能性がある。

[0039] そこで、以下に説明する実施形態ではリッチスパイク操作や運転モード切り換え等のために機関空燃比をリーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比に切り換える際に予めSC 5a、5bに流入する排気の空燃比をリッチにすることにより上記SC 5a、5bのO<sub>2</sub>ストレージにより生じる問題を解決している。SC 5a、5bに流入する排気空燃比をリッチ空燃比にすることにより、SC 5a、5bには多量のHC、CO成分を含む排気が流入する。このため、O<sub>2</sub>ストレージにより触媒内に貯蔵された酸素は排気中のHC、CO成分を酸化するのに消費され、短時間で触媒からの酸素の放出が終了する。また、上記HC、CO成分量は触媒から放出される酸素の全量を消費する量より多く設定することによりO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能により触媒から酸素が放出されている間もSC 5a、5b下流側の排気はリッチ空燃比に維持されるようになる。これにより、NO<sub>x</sub> 吸収還元触媒7から未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub> が流出することが防止される。

[0040] 機関空燃比切り換え時にSC 5a、5bに流入する排気空燃比をリッチ空燃比にする貯蔵酸素低減操作としては、例えば(A)各気筒の筒内噴射弁から気筒膨張行程または排気行程時に筒内に燃料を噴射する(以下「二次燃料噴射」という)、(B)各気筒の排気ポートに燃料を噴射する排気ポート燃料噴射弁を設け機関排気ポートに燃料噴射を噴射する(以下「排気ポート噴射」という)、(C)機関空燃比切り換え時に一時的に機関燃焼空燃比を大幅にリッチにする、等の方法がある。上記(A)、(B)の方法では、気筒の膨張、排気行程や排気ポートに噴射された燃料は燃焼せずに気化して排気中に多量のHC、CO成分を生成する。すなわち、これらの燃料は燃焼に寄与しないため比較的多量の燃料を供給した場合でも機関出力の変動等が生じない利点がある。一方、これらの燃料は燃焼に寄与しないため機関がリーン空燃比で運転されている場合には排気には比較的多量の酸素が残存する。すなわち、上記のように燃焼に寄与しない燃料を機関に供給した場合には、排気の空燃比は全体としてリッチ空燃比になるものの、排気中には未反応の酸素とHC、CO成分とが別々に存在することになる。このため、これらの酸素とHC、CO成分とがSC 5a、5b上で反応を生じ、運転条件によってはSC 5a、5bの温度が過度に上昇する可能性がある。

[0041] また、上記(C)の方法では、機関の燃焼空燃比そのものが一時的に大幅なリッチ空燃比になるため、排気中の未反応の酸素はほとんどなくなりSC 5a、5bの過熱の問題は生じないが、多量の燃料の燃焼により機関発生トルクが増大して機関の運転状態によっ

ては出力トルク変動が生じる可能性がある。従って、上記(A)から(C)の方法のいずれをとるかは機関の特性や運転状態に応じて選択することが好ましい。

【0042】なお、上記(B)（排気ポート燃料噴射）の方法を適用する場合は、上記(A)（二次燃料噴射）の場合とほぼ同様になるため、以下の実施形態では上記(A)と(C)の方法を適用する場合を例にとって説明することとする。

#### (1) 第1の実施形態

図2は本発明の第1の実施形態におけるSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量低減操作を説明するフローチャートである。本操作は、ECU30により所定間隔毎（例えばクランク軸一定回転角毎）に実行される。

【0043】図2の操作では、機関の運転条件変化によるリーン空燃比運転から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比運転への運転空燃比切り換え時、及びNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7からのNO<sub>x</sub>放出のためのリッチスパイク操作時に、機関の運転空燃比を切り換える直前に、各気筒の膨張又は排気行程に筒内燃料噴射弁から燃料を噴射することによりSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量を低減している。すなわち、本実施形態ではSC5a、5bからのO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能による酸素放出が終了してから機関の運転空燃比を切り換えるようにしている。

【0044】これにより、機関の運転空燃比がリーンからリッチ（または理論空燃比）に切り換えられる時にはSC5a、5bからの酸素放出が生じないため、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7に流入する排気の空燃比はリーン空燃比から直ちにリッチ空燃比（または理論空燃比）に変化するようになり、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7からの未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub>の放出が防止される。

【0045】図2において操作がスタートすると、ステップ201では、前述のアクセル開度センサ37からアクセル開度（運転者のアクセルペダル踏込み量）ACC Pが、また回転数センサ35の出力に基づいて算出された機関回転数NEと、SC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCとが、それぞれ読み込まれる。なお、SC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCの算出については後に詳述する。

【0046】次いで、ステップ203では上記により読み込んだアクセル開度ACCPと機関回転数NEとに基づいて、前述の①から⑤の運転モードのうち最適な運転モードM<sub>1</sub>が選択される。本実施形態では、各アクセル開度と機関回転数における最適な運転モードがアクセル開度ACCPと回転数NEとをパラメータとして用いた数値テーブルとしてECU30のROMに格納されており、ECU30はステップ201で読み込んだACCPとNEとに基づいてこの数値テーブルから最適な運転モード（①～⑤）を選択する。ステップ203におけるM<sub>1</sub>（M<sub>1</sub>=①～⑤）の値は、現在の機関運転条件から見て最適な運転モード（すなわち、後述するステップ223で切り換え操作の目標となる運転モード）を表して

いる。

【0047】次いでステップ205では、現在の運転モードM<sub>0</sub>がリーン空燃比運転（前述の①から③のモードのいずれか）か否かが判定される。M<sub>0</sub>は現在①から⑤のいずれの運転モードで機関が運転されているかを表すパラメータである（M<sub>0</sub>=①～⑤）。ステップ205で現在リーン空燃比運転が行なわれていなければ、すなわち現在理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比運転が行なわれている場合には、目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>が①から⑤のいずれであってもリーン空燃比からリッチ空燃比（または理論空燃比）への空燃比の切り換えは生じず、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7から未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub>が流出する可能性はないため、直ちにステップ223が実行され機関の運転モードが目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>に切り換えられる（現在目標運転モードで運転されている場合には現在のモードが継続される）。そして、切り換え完了後ステップ225では現在の運転モードM<sub>0</sub>が切り換え後の運転モード（M<sub>1</sub>）に応じた値に更新される。

【0048】一方、ステップ205で現在①から③の運転モードで機関が運転されていた場合には、ステップ207で、現在NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7からNO<sub>x</sub>を放出させるためのリッチスパイク操作実行が要求されているか否かがリッチスパイクフラグFRの値に基づいて判定される。前述のように、本実施形態ではECU30は別途実行される図示しないルーチンにより、機関運転状態に基づいてNO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7に吸収されたNO<sub>x</sub>量を表すNO<sub>x</sub>カウンタCNOXの値を積算しており、カウンタCNOXの値が所定値を超えて増大した場合にはリッチスパイクフラグFRの値を1にセットする。ステップ207で現在リッチスパイク操作が要求されている場合には後述する貯蔵酸素量低減操作（ステップ213から217）を実行する必要があるため、操作は直接ステップ211に進む。また、現在リッチスパイク操作が要求されていない場合には次にステップ209で、目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>がリッチ空燃比または理論空燃比運転（モード④または⑤）か否かが判定される。目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>がモード④と⑤のいずれでもない場合には、この場合もリーン空燃比運転からリッチ空燃比運転への切り換えは生じないためステップ223に進み運転モードの目標モードへの切り換えが実行される。

【0049】一方、ステップ207でFR=1（リッチスパイク要求）だった場合、及びステップ209で目標運転モードが④または⑤であった場合には、すなわち機関運転空燃比をリーン空燃比からリッチ空燃比（または理論空燃比）に切り換える必要があるため、ステップ211に進み、現在酸素量低減操作が完了したか否かを判定する。そして、低減操作が完了していない場合にはステップ213から217の酸素量低減のための二次燃料噴射（膨張または排気行程における筒内燃料噴射）を実行し、燃焼に寄与しない燃料を気筒に供給する。

【0050】すなわち、ステップ213ではステップ201で読み込んだSC5a、5bの現在の貯蔵酸素量〇SCから、SC5a、5bに貯蔵された酸素の全量を消費し、かつSC5a、5b下流側の排気を理論空燃比よりリッチ側に維持するのに必要な合計燃料量(HC量)を計算するとともに、この合計燃料量を予め定められた二次燃料噴射実行回数(後述)で割って1回当たりに必要とされる二次燃料噴射量が算出される。そして、ステップ215では現在いずれかの気筒の二次燃料噴射量をセットするタイミングか否かが判定され、セットタイミングであった場合には算出した二次燃料噴射量がステップ217で燃料噴射回路にセットされる。これにより、二次燃料噴射タイミング(膨張または排気行程)になると各気筒では二次燃料噴射が実行される。なお、予め定めた回数(気筒数)だけ二次燃料噴射が実行されるとステップ211では酸素量低減操作が終了したと判定され、ステップ219以下が実行される。

【0051】すなわち、貯蔵酸素量低減操作が終了しSC5a、5bからの酸素放出が終了すると、ステップ219では現在リッチスパイク操作が要求されている( $FR = 1$ )か否かが判定され、リッチスパイク操作が要求されればステップ221でリッチスパイク操作が実行され、要求されていない場合にはステップ223で目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>(この場合はリッチまたは理論空燃比運転モード)への切り換えが実行される。

【0052】なお、ステップ221のリッチスパイク操作では、機関はNO<sub>x</sub>カウンタCNOXの値が0になるまでモード⑤のリッチ空燃比均質混合気燃焼で運転され、NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒7に吸収されたNO<sub>x</sub>の全量が放出され、還元浄化される。次に、本実施形態における二次燃料噴射の回数について説明する。本実施形態では二次燃料噴射は#1、4の気筒群と#2、3の気筒群について各1回または#1から#4の全気筒について1回のいずれかが行なわれる。すなわち、SC5a、5bの容量が比較的小さいため各SC5a、5bそれぞれにつき1回の二次燃料噴射でSCの貯蔵酸素量を低減することができる場合には各気筒群につき1回のみ二次燃料噴射が実行され、比較的SC5a、5bの容量が大きく、1回の二次燃料噴射では貯蔵酸素量を充分に低減できない場合には各SC5a、5bにつきそれぞれ2回の(すなわち#1から#4の全気筒につき1回ずつ)二次燃料噴射が実行される。いずれの二次燃料噴射を実行するかはSC5a、5bの容量に応じて予め決定される。なお、各気筒群は点火順序の連続しない気筒から構成されているため、各気筒群毎に1回二次燃料噴射を実行する場合には、前述のステップ211では連続した点火順序の2つの気筒で(例えば#1と#3、または#3と#2等)1回ずつ二次燃料噴射を実行すると貯蔵酸素量低減操作が完了したと判定される。

【0053】また、上述したように、本実施形態では貯

蔵酸素量低減操作実行中は機関ではリーン空燃比の運転モード(①から③)が継続される。

## (2) 第2の実施形態

次に、本発明の第2の実施形態について説明する。上記第1の実施形態では、二次燃料噴射のみによってSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量低減操作を行い、貯蔵酸素量低減操作(二次燃料噴射)が完了するまでリッチ空燃比運転への運転モードの切り換えを行なわなかった。本実施形態では、全気筒に1回ずつ二次燃料噴射が必要な機関では、リーン空燃比運転モードからリッチ空燃比運転モードへの切り換え指令が出たタイミングにより、運転モード切り換え(吸気行程燃料噴射への移行)ができるタイミングの気筒については吸気行程燃料噴射に切り換えるとともに吸気行程燃料噴射量を二次燃料噴射量相当分だけ増量し、吸気行程燃料噴射への移行が間に合わない気筒については二次燃料噴射を行なう。

【0054】図3は、本実施形態の二次燃料噴射(図3では膨張行程終期から排気行程初期にかけて二次燃料噴射を実施する例を示す)と吸気行程燃料噴射增量のタイミングを説明する図である。図3はモード①(リーン成層燃焼(圧縮行程1回噴射)からモード④(理論空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程噴射))への切り換えのタイミングを示しているが、他のモード間の切り換えも図3と同様になる。

【0055】図3は、#1から#4気筒のそれぞれの燃料噴射タイミングとその燃料噴射を行なうための燃料噴射量セットタイミングを示している。図3においてCSETは圧縮行程燃料噴射量セットタイミング、CINJは圧縮行程燃料噴射実行タイミング、EXSETは二次燃料噴射量セットタイミング、EXINJは二次燃料噴射実行タイミング、ISETは吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミング、IINJは吸気行程燃料噴射実行タイミングをそれぞれ示している。また、図3にCHで示すのは運転モード切り換えのための貯蔵酸素量低減操作開始タイミングを示している。また、図3において「吸」、「圧」、「膨」、「排」はそれぞれ各気筒の吸気行程、圧縮行程、膨張行程、排気行程を表している。図3に示すように本実施形態では、二次燃料噴射量は圧縮行程終期にセットされ(EXSET)、吸気行程燃料噴射量は排気行程初期にセットされる(ISET)。

【0056】今、図3CHのタイミングで運転モード切り換えのための触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作が開始されたとすると、#1気筒ではCHは圧縮行程中期に相当するため、既に吸気行程燃料噴射タイミング(IINJ)は終わっており、タイミングCSETで圧縮行程燃料噴射量のセットが完了している。従って#1気筒では直ちには運転モードの切換ができないため、圧縮行程燃料噴射IINJはそのまま実行することとして、タイミングEXSETで二次燃料噴射量をセットして二次燃料噴射(EXINJ)を実行する。

【0057】一方、#3気筒ではCHのタイミングは吸気行程中期に相当するが、このタイミングでは既に吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミングは過ぎてしまっているため直ちに吸気行程燃料噴射に移行することはできない。このため、#3気筒ではそのまま圧縮行程燃料噴射を実行することとしてCSETで圧縮行程燃料噴射量をセットするとともに、その後の圧縮行程終期の二次燃料噴射量セットタイミング(EXSET)で二次燃料噴射量をセットして二次燃料噴射を実行することとする。

【0058】また、同様に、#4気筒ではCHのタイミングは排気行程中期に相当するが、この場合も吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミング(INJ)が過ぎてしまっているため直ちに吸気行程燃料噴射に移行することはできない。従って、#3気筒と同様圧縮行程燃料噴射(CINJ)を継続したままで二次燃料噴射(EXINJ)が実行される。

【0059】一方、#2気筒ではCHのタイミングは膨張行程中期に相当するため、吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミング(ISET)にはまだ到達しておらず、吸気行程燃料噴射に移行することができる。そこで、#2気筒では運転モードを切り換えて吸気行程燃料噴射を行なうとともに、ISETでセットする燃料噴射量を二次燃料噴射量相当分だけ増量する。すなわち、#2気筒については二次燃料噴射を行なわずに運転モードの切り換えを実行し、その代わりに運転モード切り換え直後の吸気行程燃料噴射量に二次燃料噴射量相当分を上乗せして燃料噴射量を設定する。

【0060】図3のタイミングチャートから判るように、本実施形態では運転モード切り換えのための触媒貯蔵酸素量低減操作が開始後、二次燃料噴射量セットタイミングが吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミングより先になる気筒(図3の場合には#1、#3、#4気筒)については圧縮行程燃料噴射を継続したままで(すなわち運転モードを切り換えずに)二次燃料噴射を実行するが、吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミングが二次燃料噴射量セットタイミングより先になる気筒(#2気筒)については運転モードを切り換えて吸気行程燃料噴射を行い、吸気行程燃料噴射時に他の気筒の二次燃料噴射量相当分の燃料を增量するようしている。なお、この場合も全気筒で1回ずつ二次燃料噴射または吸気行程燃料噴射量の增量が行なわれた時点で触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作は終了し、その後は全気筒で運転モードが切り換えられる。

【0061】すなわち、本実施形態では触媒の貯蔵量低減操作は運転モード切り換え前に開始され(#1、#3、#4気筒)、運転モード切り換え後(#2気筒)に終了することになる。これにより、運転モード切り換え時間を短縮することができる。図4は、本実施形態の上記貯蔵酸素量低減操作を説明するフローチャートである。図4の操作はECU30により所定間隔毎に実行さ

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れるルーチンとして行なわれる。図4のフローチャートは、図2のフローチャートのステップ213から217をステップ413から421で置換した点のみが図2のフローチャートと相違している。そこで、ここでは相違点についてのみ説明する。

【0062】ステップ413では、図2ステップ213と同様にSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCから1回の二次燃料噴射の量が設定される、そしてステップ415では現在吸気行程燃料噴射量のセットタイミング(図3ISET)にある場合にはステップ419で運転モード切り換え後の吸気行程燃料噴射量にステップ413で算出した二次燃料噴射量を上乗せして增量した量を吸気行程燃料噴射量としてセットする。また、吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミングがない場合には、ステップ417、ステップ421で二次燃料噴射量のセットが行なわれる。これにより、吸気行程燃料噴射量のセットタイミング(ISET)に間に合う気筒では、二次燃料噴射の代わりに運転モードの切り換えと燃料噴射量の增量とが行なわれるようになる。

【0063】なお、本実施形態では吸気行程燃料噴射のセットタイミングに間に合う気筒以外の気筒では二次燃料噴射を実行することにより貯蔵酸素量の低減操作を行なっているが、二次燃料噴射を実行せずに、各気筒とも次の吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミングから上記の#2気筒のように二次燃料噴射量相当分だけ吸気行程燃料噴射量を增量するようにしても良い。この場合には各気筒で運転モード切り換え直後に触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作が行なわれることになる。

【0064】(3) 第3の実施形態

次に、本発明の第3の実施形態について説明する。前述の第1の実施形態では機関運転モード切り換えの際に、触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作終了後に運転モードを切り換えており、第2の実施形態では一部の気筒又は全部の気筒で運転モード切り換え直後に低減操作が行われる。これに対して本実施形態では、貯蔵酸素量低減操作は運転モードの切り換えとは独立して行なわれる。すなわち、各気筒では運転モードの切り換えを通常通り実施し、各気筒の運転モードの切り換えが終了するまで運転モードとは無関係に二次燃料噴射が実行される。実際の運転では例えばモード①(リーン空燃比成層燃焼(圧縮行程1回噴射))の非常にリーンな燃焼状態から急加速等で⑤(リッチ空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程1回噴射))のリッチ空燃比燃焼に移行する必要が生じる場合があるが、このような場合には直接①から⑤に運転モードを切り換えると燃焼空燃比の急激な変化のために出力トルクの急激な変動が生じる場合がある。そこで、このような場合にはモード①から④に直接運転モードを切り換えず、一旦モード①から②(リーン空燃比均質混合気/成層燃焼(吸気行程/圧縮行程2回噴射))と③(リーン空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程1回噴射))を経由して

⑤に運転モードを切り換えるようにする場合がある。

【0065】本実施形態では、運転モード切り換え時には上記①→②→③→⑤等の切り替え操作は独立して実行し、同時にモード切り換え完了まで二次燃料噴射を実行するようにしている。すなわち、本実施形態では運転モードの切り換えと触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作とが並行して行なわれることになる。これにより貯蔵酸素量低減操作実行により運転モード切り換え時間が影響を受けることが防止される。

【0066】図5は、本実施形態の触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作を説明するフローチャートである。本操作は、ECU30により所定間隔で実行されるルーチンとして行なわれる。図5において、ステップ501から509は図2のステップ201から209と同一の操作を示す。本実施形態においても、ステップ501から509でリーン空燃比からリッチ空燃比への運転モードの切り換えが無い場合には直ちにステップ523に進み目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>と現在の運転モードM<sub>0</sub>に応じたモード切り換え操作が実行される。

【0067】一方、ステップ501から509でリーン空燃比運転からリッチ空燃比運転への運転モードの切り換えが必要とされる場合には、ステップ511に進み、目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>と現在の運転モードM<sub>0</sub>とから、M<sub>0</sub>→M<sub>1</sub>への移行に要するサイクル数に基づいて、二次燃料噴射を何回実行可能かが算出され、二次燃料噴射実行回数と現在の触媒貯蔵酸素量OSCとから一回当たりの二次燃料噴射量が算出される。二次燃料噴射量は、SC5a、5bから放出される酸素の全量を消費し、かつSC5a、5b下流側の排気をリッチ空燃比に維持するだけのHCを生成できる量として算出される。

【0068】そして、二次燃料噴射量算出後、ステップ513から521では運転モードの切り換えが終了するまで二次燃料噴射が実行される。又、このときステップ521、523では、二次燃料噴射と並行してリッチスパイク操作への移行（ステップ521）及び現在の運転モードM<sub>0</sub>と目標運転モードM<sub>1</sub>とに応じた移行操作が行なわれる。そして、ステップ513またはステップ521の移行操作が完了すると、ステップ513ではモード切り換えが終了したと判定され、二次燃料噴射が停止される。

【0069】次に、上記各実施形態で二次燃料噴射量算出のために使用されるSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCの推定方法について説明する。本実施形態では、SC5a、5b入口に配置した空燃比センサ29a、29bで検出したSC5a、5b入口の排気空燃比AFと、機関吸入空気重量流量（グラム／秒）GAとからSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCを算出する。

【0070】前述のように、触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能により、SC5a、5bに流入する排気空燃比が理論空燃比よりリーンのときには排気中の余剰酸素がSC5

a、5bに吸収され、また、理論空燃比よりリッチのときにはSC5a、5bから吸収した酸素が放出され、どちらの場合もSC5a、5b出口における排気空燃比は理論空燃比近傍になる。従って、SC5a、5bに吸収、またはSC5a、5bから放出される酸素量は、空燃比AFの排気を理論空燃比にするために必要な酸素量に相当する。

【0071】今、ある量Fの燃料を燃焼して空燃比AFの排気を生成するために必要な空気の重量がGAであったとすると、GA = AF × Fとなる。また、同じ量Fの燃料を燃焼して理論空燃比STの排気を生成するために必要な空気重量をGA' とすると、GA' = ST × Fとなる。一方、空気中の酸素濃度をAO<sub>2</sub> とすると、重量GA及びGA' の空気中には、それぞれAO<sub>2</sub> × GAとAO<sub>2</sub> × GA' となる。すなわち、ある量Fの燃料を燃焼して理論空燃比STの排気を生成するために必要な酸素量はAO<sub>2</sub> × GA' = AO<sub>2</sub> × ST × Fとなる。一方、同じ燃料を燃焼して空燃比AFの排気を生成した場合の酸素量はAO<sub>2</sub> × GA = AO<sub>2</sub> × AF × Fとなる。従って、空燃比AFの排気を理論空燃比にするために必要とされる酸素量、すなわち、AF > STとした場合にSC5a、5bに吸収される酸素量は(AO<sub>2</sub> × GA) - (AO<sub>2</sub> × GA') = AO<sub>2</sub> × F × (AF - ST)となる。また、F = GA / AFであるので、結局酸素の放出／吸収量はAO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (AF - ST) / AF = AO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF)となる。ここで、ΔAF = (AF - ST)である。また、GAは単位時間（秒）当たりの空気流量であるため、AF > STであれば機関運転中に触媒には単位時間あたりAO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF)の酸素が吸収され、触媒の貯蔵酸素量OSCはAO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF)だけ増大することになる。(AF < STであればΔAFはマイナスとなり、触媒の貯蔵酸素量OSCは減少する)。

【0072】従って、本来排気空燃比がAF、吸入空気重量流量がGAの場合、SC5a、5bの時間Δt当たりの貯蔵酸素量OSCの変化量は、AO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF) × Δtとなるが、実際にはOSCの変化量は触媒の酸素吸放出速度に影響を受けるため、実際のOSC変化量はAO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF) × Δt × Kとして表される（Kは酸素吸放出速度に基づく補正係数）。また、実際には酸素の吸放出速度は触媒温度に影響を受け、触媒温度が高い程大きくなる。更に、酸素の吸収と放出とでは速度が異なり、酸素の吸収速度は放出速度より高い。従って、本実施形態ではOSCの時間Δt当たりの変化量を吸収(AF ≥ ST)と放出(AF < ST)との場合に分けて以下の式で表している。

【0073】吸収(AF ≥ ST) : AO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF) × Δt × A  
放出(AF < ST) : AO<sub>2</sub> × GA × (ΔAF / AF) × Δt × B

ここで、A、Bは酸素の吸放出速度や触媒温度により定まる補正係数である。図6は、本実施形態におけるSC 5 a、5 bの貯蔵酸素量算出操作を説明するフローチャートである。本操作はECU30により上記△tに相当する一定時間間隔で実行されるルーチンにより行なわれる。本操作では、上記の式を用いてSC 5 a、5 bの時間△t当たりの貯蔵酸素量OSCの変化量を算出し、機関始動時からこの変化量を積算することにより現在のSC 5 a、5 bの貯蔵酸素量OSCを推定している。

【0074】図6の操作では、まずステップ601でSC 5 a、5 b入口の排気空燃比AF、機関の吸入空気重量流量GA、及びSC 5 a、5 b温度TCATが読み込まれる。本実施形態では、排気空燃比AFはSC 5 a、5 b入口の空燃比センサ29a、29bにより検出された排気空燃比の平均値として求められる。また、吸入空気重量流量GAは、単位時間当たりに機関に供給される燃料量（燃料噴射量）と排気空燃比AFの積として算出される。また、SC 5 a、5 bの温度TCATは触媒床に温度センサを配置して計測しても良いし、予め機関負荷（燃料噴射量）、回転数と排気温度との関係を求めておき、機関燃料噴射量（機関負荷）と回転数とに基づいて排気温度を算出してこの排気温度を近似的にTCATとして用いても良い。

【0075】上記によりAF、GA、TCATを読み込んだ後、ステップ603ではAF≥ST（STは理論空燃比）か否かが算出され、AF≥STの場合には現在排気浄化触媒は酸素を吸収しており、貯蔵酸素量OSCは増大しているので、ステップ605でSC 5 a、5 bの酸素吸収速度と触媒温度TCATとから補正係数Aを算出する。そして、ステップ607では貯蔵酸素量OSCの値が、 $(AO_2 \times GA \times (\Delta AF / AF) \times \Delta t \times A)$ だけ増大される。そして、ステップ609では増大後のOSCの値が最大値OSC<sub>MAX</sub>を越える場合にはOSCの値がOSC<sub>MAX</sub>に設定される。OSC<sub>MAX</sub>は、SC 5 a、5 bの貯蔵可能な最大酸素量（飽和量）である。

【0076】一方、ステップ603でAF<STであった場合には、SC 5 a、5 bは現在酸素を放出中であるため、ステップ613で酸素放出速度と触媒温度TCATとに基づいて補正係数Bを算出し、ステップ615ではOSCの値が、 $(AO_2 \times GA \times (\Delta AF / AF) \times \Delta t \times B)$ だけ増大される（この場合△AF<0であるため、OSCは減少する）。そして、ステップ617、619ではOSCの値を最小値0で制限して今回の操作を終了する。なお、機関始動時にはステップ607、615におけるOSCの初期値はOSC<sub>MAX</sub>に設定される。機関停止時にはSC 5 a、5 b大気雰囲気（リーン空燃比）になっておりSC 5 a、5 bは酸素で飽和しているためである。

【0077】図6の操作により推定された触媒の貯蔵酸

素量OSCを用いてSC 5 a、5 bの貯蔵酸素量低減操作に必要な燃料量を算出することにより前述の各実施形態では正確な貯蔵酸素量低減操作が行なわれ、リーン空燃比からリッチ空燃比への機関運転モードの切り換え時にNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7から未浄化のNO<sub>x</sub>が流出することが防止される。

【0078】次に、図7から図9を用いて図6の操作に使用するSC 5 a、5 bの飽和酸素量OSC<sub>MAX</sub>の補正について説明する。図6の操作では飽和酸素量OSC<sub>MAX</sub>を適宜な一定値として貯蔵酸素量OSCを算出するようとしても良いが、より正確には触媒の劣化に応じてOSC<sub>MAX</sub>の値を補正することが好ましい。触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能は触媒の劣化とともに低下し、触媒が貯蔵できる最大酸素量（飽和量）OSC<sub>MAX</sub>も低下していく。そこで、本実施形態では触媒の劣化状態を判別し、劣化状態に応じてOSC<sub>MAX</sub>の値を補正する。

【0079】まず触媒の劣化状態の判別方法について説明する。本実施形態では、SC 5 a、5 b上流側の空燃比センサ29a、29bの出力信号曲線の軌跡長とNO<sub>x</sub>吸収還元触媒7下流側の空燃比センサ31出力信号曲線の軌跡長に基づいて触媒の劣化状態を判定する。図7は機関空燃比が理論空燃比にフィードバック制御されているときの、排気浄化触媒上流側に設けた空燃比センサ出力VOMと触媒下流側に設けた空燃比センサ出力VOSの一般的な波形を示している。図7において(A)は排気浄化触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能が高い場合の波形を、図7(B)はO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能が低下した場合の波形をそれぞれ示している。

【0080】図7(A)、(B)に示すように、理論空燃比にフィードバック制御されている状態では、機関空燃比（排気空燃比）は理論空燃比を中心として比較的小さな範囲でリッチとリーンに変動する。このため、上流側空燃比センサ出力VOMも理論空燃比を中心として周期的な変動を示す。この場合、触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能が充分に高ければ、触媒に流入する排気空燃比が理論空燃比を中心として多少変動しても触媒出口の排気空燃比は理論空燃比近傍に維持される。このため、O<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能が充分に高い触媒では下流側空燃比センサ出力VOSは図7(A)に示すようにあまり変動しない。従って、出力VOSの軌跡に沿った長さはLVOSは比較的小さくなる。ところが、触媒が劣化してO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能が低下すると触媒の酸素吸放出量が低下するため下流側における空燃比も上流側の空燃比変動に応じて変動するようになる。このため、下流側空燃比センサ出力VOSの軌跡長LVOSはO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能の低下とともに大きくなり図7(B)に示すようにO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能が完全に失われた状態では上流側の空燃比センサ出力VOMの軌跡長LVOMと等しくなってしまう。すなわち、空燃比フィードバック制御中の下流側空燃比センサ出力VOSの軌跡長LVOSと上流側空燃比センサ出力

VOMの軌跡長LVOMとの比LR ( $LR = LVOS / LVOM$ ) をとると、 $O_2$ ストレージ機能が充分に高い場合にはLRは1よりはるかに小さい値となり、 $O_2$ ストレージ機能が低下するにつれて増大して1に近づくようになる。本実施形態では、上記に基づいて上流側空燃比センサ29a、29b出力と下流側空燃比センサ31出力との軌跡長の比LRをSC5a、5bの $O_2$ ストレージ機能低下を表すパラメータとして使用している。なお、本実施形態のように2つの排気浄化触媒5a、5bと2つの上流側空燃比センサ29a、29bがある機関の場合には2つの上流側空燃比センサ29a、29bの出力の平均値を上流側空燃比センサ出力VOMとして用いて軌跡長LVOMを算出しても良いし、あるいは空燃比センサ29a、29b毎に出力軌跡長を算出し、両方の軌跡長を平均したものを上流側空燃比センサ出力軌跡長LVOMとして用いても良い。図8は、本実施形態のSC5a、5bの劣化を考慮した貯蔵酸素量最大値OSC<sub>MAX</sub>の演算操作を説明するフローチャートである。本操作は、ECU30により一定時間毎に実行されるルーチンとして行なわれる。

【0081】図8において操作がスタートすると、ステップ801では劣化パラメータ演算実行条件が成立しているか否かが判定される。本実施形態では、ステップ801の条件は、機関がモード④(理論空燃比均質混合気燃焼(吸気行程1回噴射))で運転されており、かつ空燃比センサ29a、29bに基づく空燃比フィードバック制御が実施されていることとされる。図7で説明したように、軌跡長比LRを触媒の $O_2$ ストレージ機能を表すパラメータとして使用するためには、軌跡長比LRを機関空燃比が理論空燃比にフィードバック制御されている状態で算出する必要があるためである。

【0082】ステップ801で条件が成立した場合には、ステップ803で上流側空燃比センサ29a、29bの出力電圧VOMと下流側空燃比センサ31の出力電圧VOSとが読み込まれる。なお、本実施形態ではセンサ29a、29bの出力電圧の平均値をVOMとして使用する。次いでステップ805では上流側空燃比センサ出力VOMの軌跡長LVOMと下流側空燃比センサ出力VOSの軌跡長LVOSとが、

$$LVOM = LVOM + |VOM - VOM_{-1}|$$

$$LVOS = LVOS + |VOS - VOS_{-1}|$$

として算出される。ここでVOM<sub>-1</sub>、VOS<sub>-1</sub>は、それぞれ前回本操作実行時のVOMとVOSとの値であり、LVOM、LVOS算出毎にステップ807で更新される。すなわち、本実施形態では図9に示すように、 $|VOM - VOM_{-1}|$ と $|VOS - VOS_{-1}|$ の積算値をそれぞれLVOM、LVOSとして用いる近似計算を行なっている。

【0083】ステップ809、ステップ811は軌跡長の算出期間の判定操作である。本実施形態では、上記L

VOM、LVOSの積算は操作実行毎に1ずつ増大されるカウンタCTの値が所定値Tに到達するまで行なわれる。なお、所定値Tは上記積算期間の合計が数十秒程度になるよう設定されている。ステップ811で期間Tが経過した場合には、ステップ813で、期間内に積算されたLVOM、LVOSの値から軌跡長比LRが、 $LR = LVOS / LVOM$ として算出される。また、ステップ815では上記軌跡長比LR( $O_2$ ストレージ機能パラメータ)の値から予め設定された関係に基づいてOSC<sub>MAX</sub>の補正係数RDが求められる。そして、ステップ819では現在のSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量最大値OSC<sub>MAX</sub>が、 $OSC_{MAX} = OSC_{MAX0} \times RD$ として算出される。ここで、OSC<sub>MAX0</sub>はSC5a、5bが全く劣化していない新品の状態での貯蔵酸素量最大値である。

【0084】図10は、図8ステップ817で補正係数RDを求めるのに使用される、軌跡長比LRと補正係数RDとの関係を示すグラフである。図10に示すように、補正係数RDの値は触媒が全く劣化していない状態( $LR < 1.0$ )では1.0に設定され、触媒の劣化が進むにつれて(LRの値が1に近づくにつれて)小さくなるように設定される。

【0085】図10によりSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量最大値OSC<sub>MAX</sub>を触媒の劣化程度に応じて設定することにより、前述の各実施形態におけるSC5a、5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCの推定精度が向上するため、前述の各実施形態において更に正確な貯蔵酸素量低減操作を行うことが可能となる。

#### 【0086】

【発明の効果】各請求項に記載の発明によれば、 $O_2$ ストレージ機能を有する排気浄化触媒を排気通路に配置した場合の触媒下流側の排気空燃比の、リーン空燃比から理論空燃比またはリッチ空燃比への変化の遅れを防止することが可能となる共通の効果を奏する。

#### 【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明を自動車用内燃機関に適用した場合の実施形態の概略構成を示す図である。

【図2】本発明の排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作の第1の実施形態を説明するフローチャートである。

【図3】本発明の排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作の第2の実施形態を説明するタイミング図である。

【図4】本発明の排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作の第2の実施形態を説明するフローチャートである。

【図5】本発明の排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量低減操作の第3の実施形態を説明するフローチャートである。

【図6】第1から第3の実施形態で使用する排気浄化触媒の貯蔵酸素量推定操作を説明するフローチャートである。

【図7】排気浄化触媒の劣化による、上流側空燃比センサ出力と下流側空燃比センサ出力との変化を説明する図

である。

【図8】排気浄化触媒劣化を考慮した貯蔵酸素量推定操作を説明するフローチャートである。

【図9】図8の操作で使用する空燃比センサ出力軌跡長の算出方法を説明する図である。

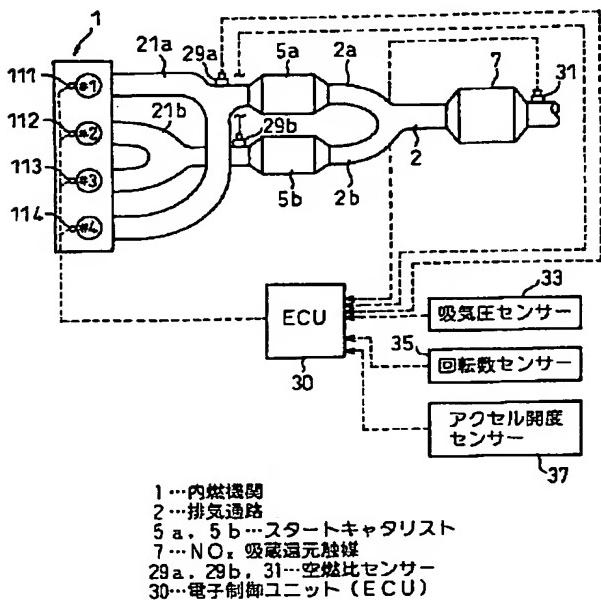
【図10】排気浄化触媒のO<sub>2</sub>ストレージ機能の補正係数と軌跡長比との関係を説明する図である。

#### \* 【符号の説明】

- 1…内燃機関
- 2…排気通路
- 5 a, 5 b…スタートキャタリスト (SC)
- 7…NO<sub>x</sub>吸蔵還元触媒
- 29 a, 29 b, 31…空燃比センサー
- 30…電子制御ユニット (ECU)

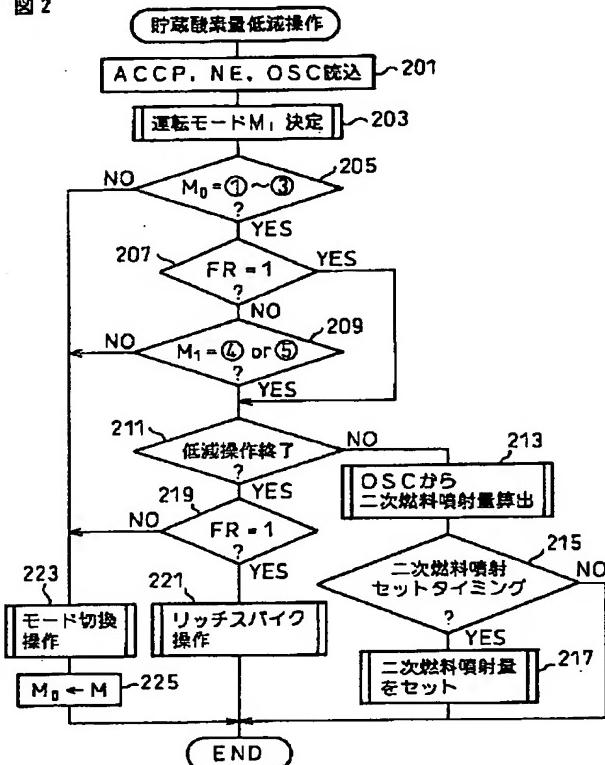
【図1】

図1



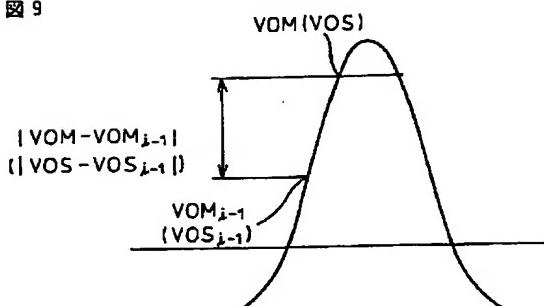
【図2】

図2



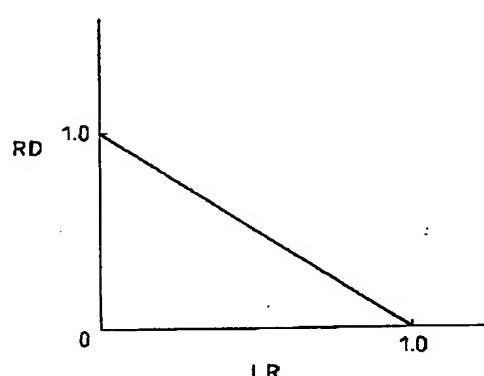
【図9】

図9

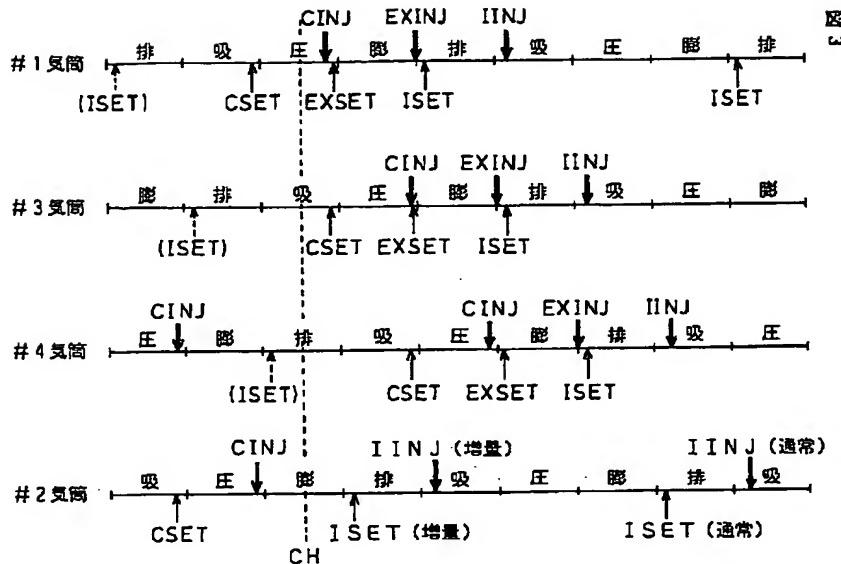


【図10】

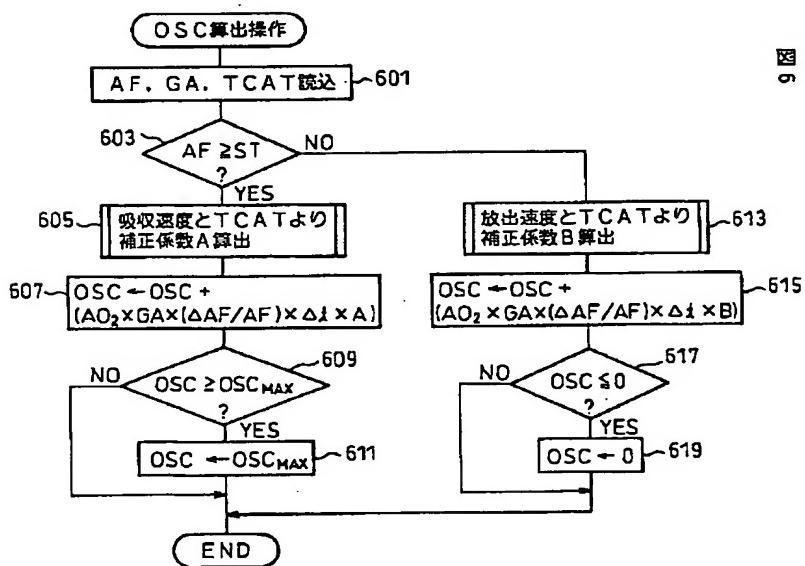
図10



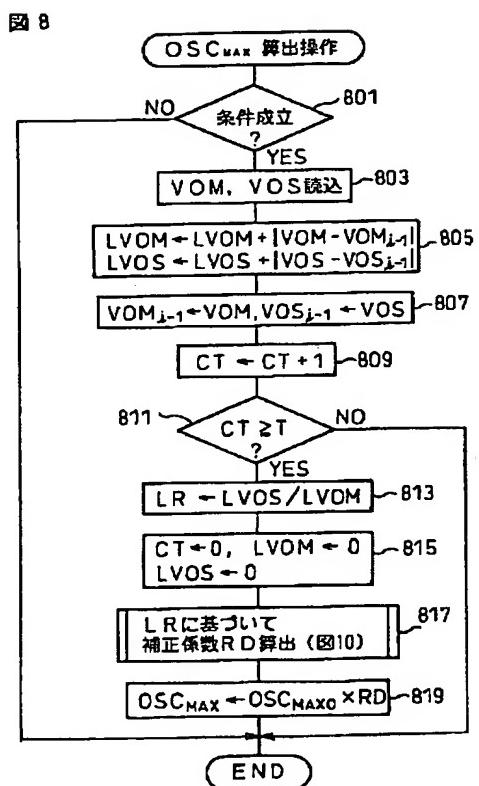
【図3】



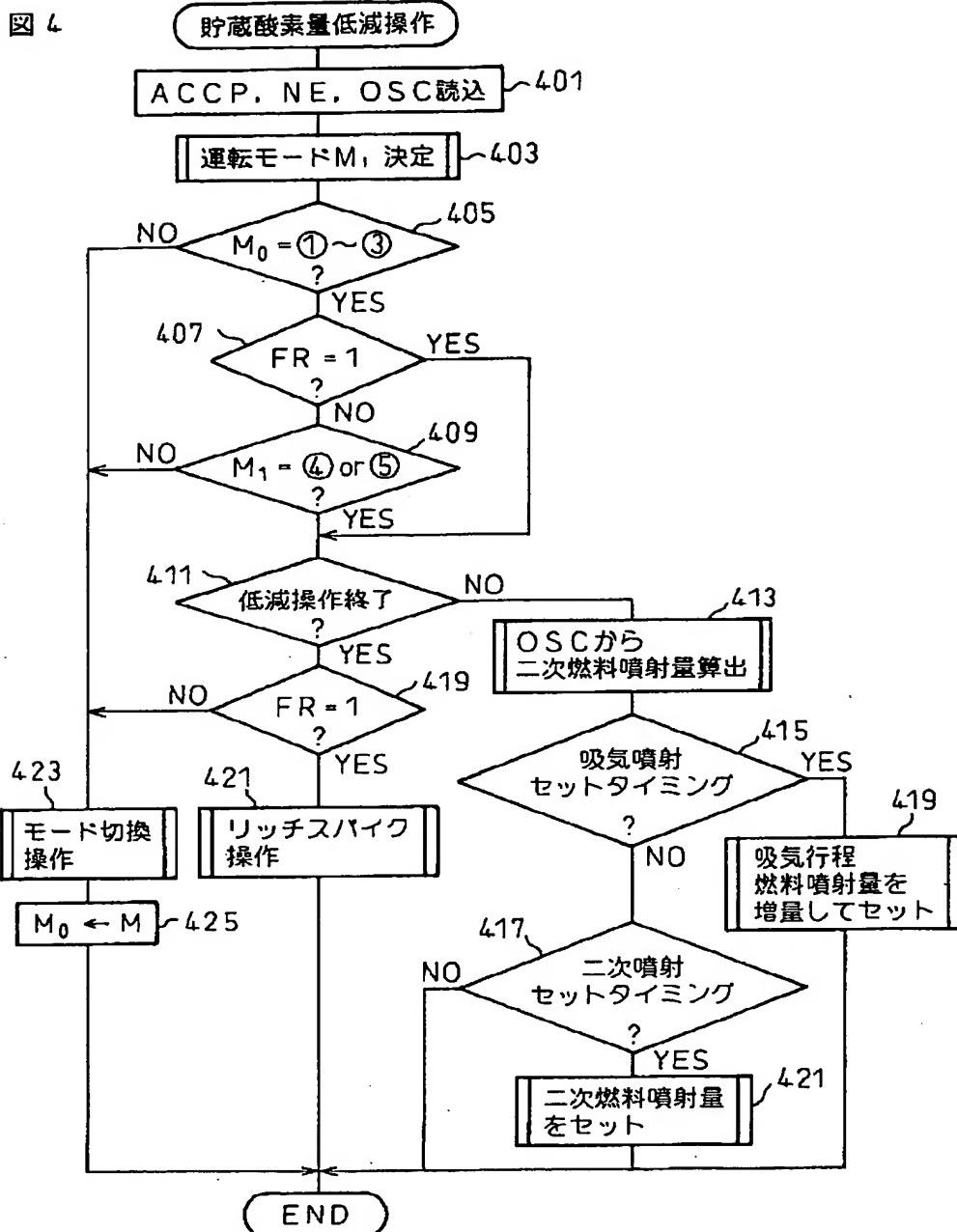
【図6】



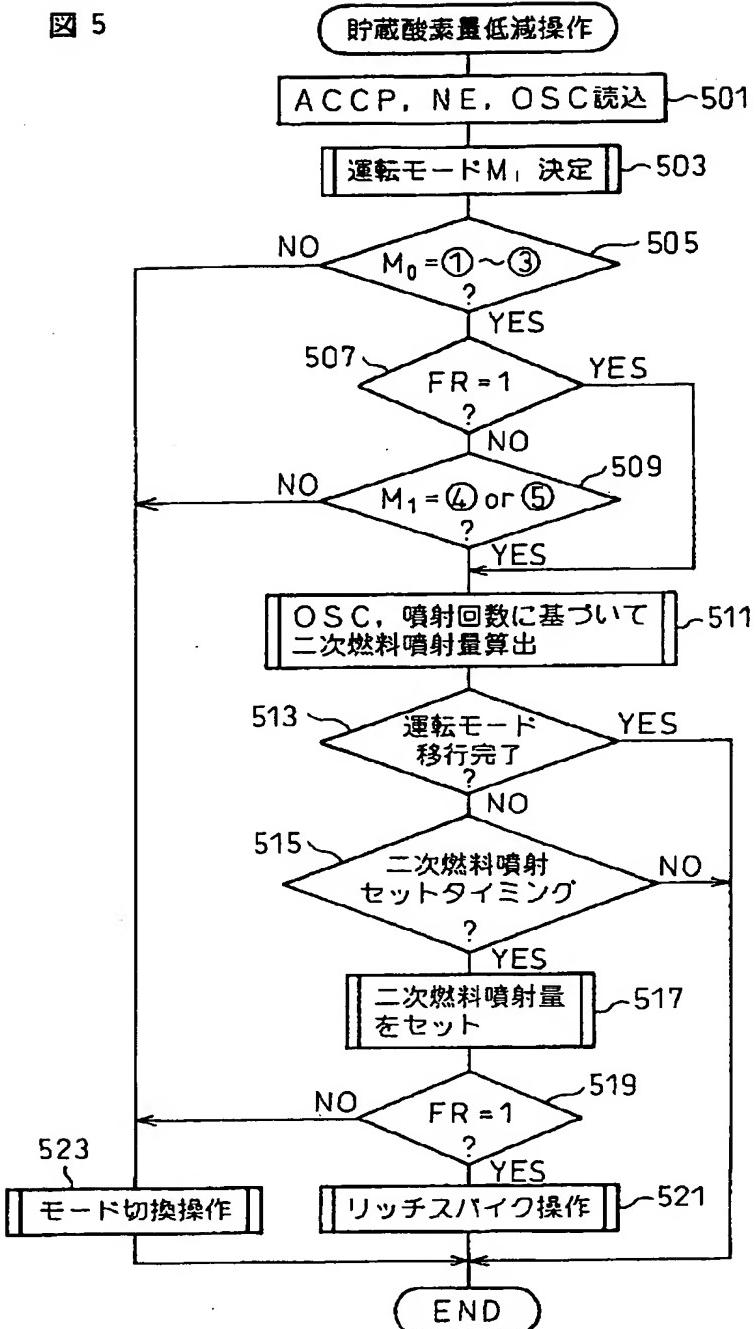
【図8】



【図4】

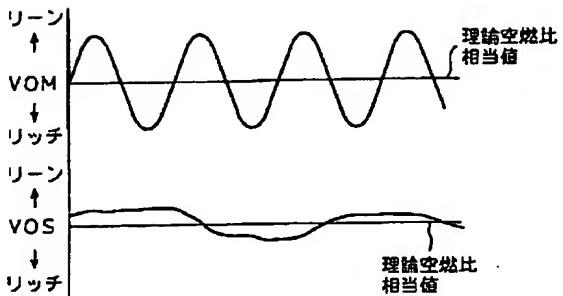


【図5】

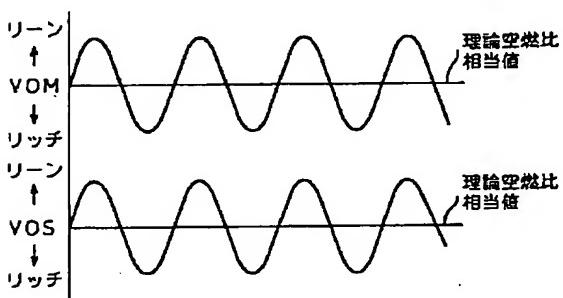


【図7】

図7 (A)



(B)



## 【手続補正書】

【提出日】平成11年7月5日(1999.7.5)

## 【手続補正1】

【補正対象書類名】明細書

【補正対象項目名】0061

## 【補正方法】変更

## 【補正内容】

【0061】すなわち、本実施形態では触媒の貯蔵量低減操作は運転モード切り換え前に開始され(#1, #3, #4気筒)、運転モード切り換え後(#2気筒)に終了することになる。これにより、運転モード切り換え時間を短縮することができる。図4は、本実施形態の上記貯蔵酸素量低減操作を説明するフローチャートである。図4の操作はECU30により所定間隔毎に実行されるルーチンとして行なわれる。図4のフローチャートは、図2のフローチャートのステップ213から217をステップ413, 414, 415, 416及び417で置換した点のみが図2のフローチャートと相違している。そこで、ここでは相違点についてのみ説明する。

## 【手続補正2】

【補正対象書類名】明細書

【補正対象項目名】0062

## 【補正方法】変更

## 【補正内容】

【0062】ステップ413では、図2ステップ213と同様にSC5a, 5bの貯蔵酸素量OSCから1回の二次燃料噴射の量が設定される、そしてステップ414では現在吸気行程燃料噴射量のセットタイミング(図3 ISET)にある場合にはステップ416で運転モード切り換え後の吸気行程燃料噴射量にステップ413で算出した二次燃料噴射量を上乗せして増量した量を吸気行程燃料噴射量としてセットする。また、吸気行程燃料噴射量セットタイミングがない場合には、ステップ415、ステップ417で二次燃料噴射量のセットが行なわれる。これにより、吸気行程燃料噴射量のセットタイミング(ISET)に間に合う気筒では、二次燃料噴射の代わりに運転モードの切り換えと燃料噴射量の増量を行なわれるようになる。

## 【手続補正3】

【補正対象書類名】図面

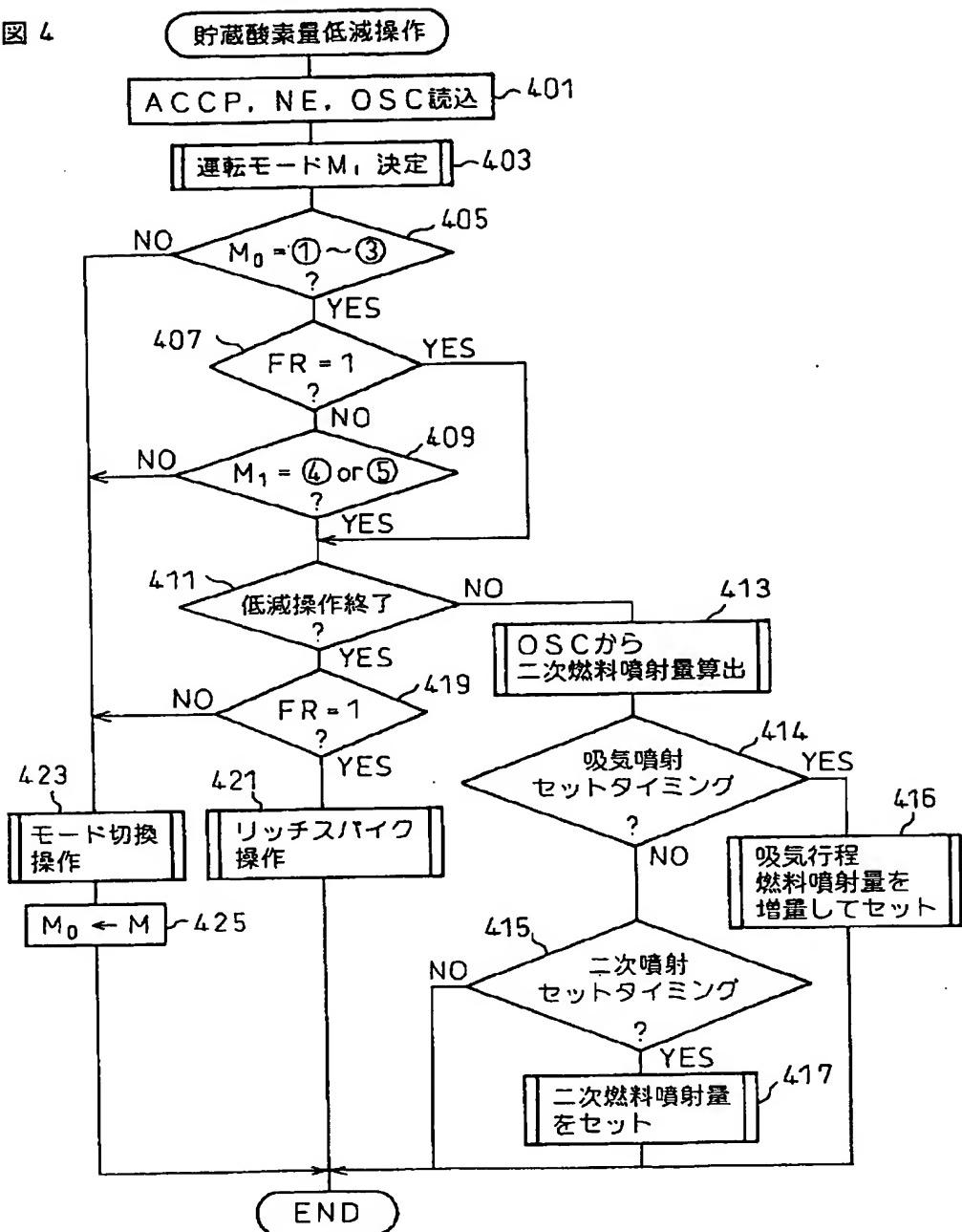
【補正対象項目名】図4

## 【補正方法】変更

## 【補正内容】

## 【図4】

図4



## フロントページの続き

F ターム(参考) 3G091 AA02 AA12 AA13 AA24 AA28  
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DA02 DA06 DB01 DB04 DB06  
DB10 DC03 DC06 EA01 EA05  
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